Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership: Promoting Staff Resilience and Well-being Through SEL Opportunities

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SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY COMPETENT LEADERSHIP: PROMOTING STAFF RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING THROUGH SEL OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

There is an abundance of research that both supports teachers' developing the social and emotional competencies (SEC) of students and acknowledges that doing so positively impacts students' academic and life success, as well as improving general well-being. As of 2020, Massachusetts required teachers to provide social emotional learning (SEL) opportunities for students, but district and school leaders have done little to develop teachers' own SEC. Yet, the literature shows that teachers' SEC matter, both to the successful implementation of SEL programs in classrooms and to teachers' own ability to manage their emotions and handle stress. Teaching is stressful and high emotional stress can lower resilience and impact job performance. This qualitative case study examined the practices of school-based leaders in one Massachusetts public school district to determine which leadership practices developed and supported the resilience and well-being of school-based staff and how those practices promoted SEL opportunities for staff. Data was gathered from leaders and school-based staff through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and document review. Findings revealed that leaders developed and supported staff resilience and well-being when they provided opportunities for collaboration, recognized and provided feedback to staff, included staff in decisions related to their work, and supported work-life balance and self-care. Engaging in these leadership practices allowed leaders to promote SEL opportunities for staff and often modeled SEC for staff.

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CHAPTER ONE[1]

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Opportunity and achievement gaps continue to challenge the educational system in the United States, as it struggles to balance a student's academic, social, and emotional skills. District and school-based leaders face the difficulties of monitoring expectations related to increased academic rigor while developing emotionally stable and healthy students. To address student and systemic educational challenges, social and emotional learning (SEL), as a conceptual framework, has gained traction in the field of education. Dusenbury et al. (2015) define SEL as:

> the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student and citizen. (p. 2)

The ever-expanding body of research available supports the benefits of students having strong SEL competencies (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones, D. et al., 2017; Zins et al., 2007). Research shows that SEL has positive effects on a student's physical health, academic achievement, and lifelong success (Jones & Kahn, 2017; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins et al., 2007). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) highlights five competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2017) necessary for students to develop college and career readiness. Numerous studies suggest that high-quality SEL programs in schools do matter, and that students with SEL competencies are better able to manage their emotions and problem-solving skills as

[1] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach to this project: Michele M. Conners, Mark T. Ito, Adam Renda, Geoffrey Rose, and Donna Tobin.

well as engage in more positive behaviors with fewer conduct and internalizing problems (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones., D. et al., 2017; Hagood, 2015; Zins et al., 2007). Due to the development of SEL competencies that promote health and wellbeing, student learning improves.

Knowing the benefits for students, district and school-based leaders work to put SEL initiatives into place. Adelman and Taylor (2000) argue that if schools and leaders focus only on instruction to help students obtain academic success, they will not effectively educate the whole child. Many states, like Massachusetts, encourage the inclusion of SEL competencies as part of their core curriculum expectations. Additionally, the federal law, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), requires educational leaders to provide the necessary support in developing a student's SEL competencies that prepare them for success in college and career. These mandates call for schools to implement SEL; however, federal and state mandates focus primarily on developing student skills only and not the adults who influence them daily, including their social and emotional development.

Limited in the research is a focus on SEL competencies for adult staff. Long (2019) reminds us that, "unless they [districts] also address the SEL needs of teachers, especially those experiencing stress, poor working conditions, and classes with many historically underserved students—long-term, system-wide gains for students are less likely" (p. 1). Further complicating the matter, research shows that teacher stress, burnout, and low job satisfaction are formidable challenges in our nation (Beltman et al., 2011; Bobek, 2002; Greenberg, et al., 2016). Educators feel increasing pressure to strengthen relationships with all students, especially those that are marginalized, disenfranchised or disengaged. It is unclear, however, the degree of training and

support available to educators, as well as how much care is being given to their own social and emotional health in the process.

Few studies have investigated the extent to which leaders in schools promote SEL through their own actions and behaviors (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Buchanan et al., 2009; DePaoli et al., 2017). While some staff, including teachers and mental health staff, recognize that children benefit from developing their SEL competencies and skills, educators are generally not intentionally shown or explicitly told by leaders how to develop these competencies in their own practices. Due to this lack of knowledge, staff feel the overall stress, as they are expected to foster an environment in which they possess and model SEL competencies themselves. However, leaders play an important role in influencing the behaviors of their staff (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Minckler, 2014; Spillane & Lee, 2014). We explore this further in our literature review.

The impact of SEL is widespread; thus, we argue that it is critical and essential that district and school leaders model the SEL competencies that shape varied aspects of their schools and/or promote opportunities that develop the SEL competencies of all members of their community. The following overarching research questions guided our work: 1) What leadership practices model SEL competencies, or promote SEL opportunities for staff? and 2) How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools? For the purpose of our study, we identified practices that modeled (i.e. displayed and demonstrated) SEL competencies. Additionally, we also identified practices that promoted (i.e. actively encouraged) opportunities for staff to develop their SEL skills. Table 1.1 summarizes our focus areas of study by researchers.

Table 1.1

Researcher and their individual focus area of study.

Researcher	Conceptual Frameworks	Focus of study
Conners	Sensemaking (Weick, 2009)	District-wide leadership practices that supported sensemaking on SEL for school-based leaders, and how its focus shaped school-based leadership practices.
Ito	Distributed Leadership (Spillane et al. 2004)	School-based leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, as they shaped adult collaboration.
Renda	CASEL (Casel, 2017)	School-based leadership practices that promoted SEL opportunities, as they shaped mental health staff.
Rose	Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977)	School-based leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, as they shaped collective efficacy.
Tobin	Prosocial Classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009)	School-based leadership practices that promoted SEL opportunities, as they shaped staff resilience and well being.

Literature Review

The following literature informed our study by supporting our argument to integrate the SEL competencies into leadership practices. We present our review in two sections. In the first section, we focus on SEL competencies for students and adults that include the social and emotional intelligences, SEL competencies in schools, the identification of key SEL competencies and skills (CASEL, 2017), and SEL for district and school-based staff. In the second section, we explore the literature that further supports our research questions, focusing on leadership in districts and schools that include emotional intelligence, theories and practices such as transformational, distributed and social capital; and finally, social and emotional leadership.

This final topic bridges the gap between what we know is good for students and adults, and discusses social and emotional competent leadership.

SEL Competencies for Students and Adults

This section describes a brief history of the social and emotional intelligences and how it set the foundation for developing CASEL's competencies framework. We also discuss the benefits of SEL competencies for students. It is important to lay this groundwork, as our group and individual studies use the CASEL competencies and skills to analyze the identified leadership practices. The work of CASEL furthers our emphasis on the importance of SEL for students' academic learning and personal health, and also provides insight into the limited research on the adults, including the leaders and staff who work with those students.

Social and Emotional Intelligences

The history of SEL dates back at least a century, as seen in the work of researchers on emotional intelligence and social intelligence. Thorndike introduced social intelligence in the 1920's and framed this concept as the ability to act wisely in human relations (Thorndike & Stein, 1937). Salovey and Mayer (1990) extended this research on social intelligences to focus more specifically on individual self-awareness and self-management skills related to one's emotions. They explicitly defined emotional intelligence (EI) as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Goleman (1996) increased the prevalence of this concept by providing a research-based argument for the importance of EI, how it can be developed throughout life, and the need for our society to increase our focus on emotional literacy.

Additionally, Goleman (2006) stated that the initial intent of EI was to "focus on a crucial set of human capacities within us as individuals, our ability to manage our own emotions and our inner potential for positive relationships" (p. 5). From these theories of social and emotional intelligences, the four domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management emerged (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). These four domains laid the groundwork for the five core competencies defined by CASEL. Traditionally, these competencies have been applied to the emotional health and wellbeing of all people.

SEL Competencies and Schools

CASEL, an organization developed in 1994 to specifically consider the needs of social and emotional development programming in districts and schools, created a framework for SEL in educational settings. Each piece of the framework addresses the mental health needs of children and the fractured response to those needs in schools (Elias et al., 1997). Research affirms the positive influence this approach has on students and schools. It makes sense that when schools have structures and supports in place to meet the needs of the whole child, students perform better academically, relationships are stronger, and behavioral issues decrease. It follows then that the purpose of CASEL's framework is to "establish high-quality, evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education" (Elbertson et al., 2010, p. 1017). Increasingly, schools became responsible for more than just a student's academic performance.

More specifically, CASEL defined five core competencies within its framework that provided educators a common understanding about the knowledge and skills students and adults needed (Table 1.2). In addition to the four competencies originally established by Goleman (1996), CASEL added "responsible decision-making" as a fifth. With this additional competency, CASEL showed us that SEL is needed to "enhance students' capacity to integrate

skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges. Like many similar ones, CASEL's integrated framework promoted intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence." (CASEL, 2017). Table 1.2 defines the core competencies in detail.

Table 1.2

A Definition of CASEL's Core SEL Competencies

SEL competencies	Definition of competency
Self-awareness	Recognizing one's emotions and identifying and cultivating one's strengths and positive qualities
Self-management	Monitoring and regulating one's emotions and establishing and working toward achieving positive goals
Social awareness	Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others and appreciating the value of human differences
Relationship skills	Establishing and maintaining healthy, rewarding relationships based on cooperation, effective communication, conflict resolution, and an ability to resist inappropriate social pressure
Responsible decision-making	Assessing situational influences and generating, implementing, and evaluating ethical solutions to problems that promote one's own and others' well-being

Source: CASEL, 2017

Research supports the need for districts and schools to focus on developing competencies as part of their students' overall academic, social, and emotional growth (Taylor, et al., 2017; Elias, 2009). Zins et al. (2007) stated, "[SEL competencies] are particularly important for children to develop because they are linked to a variety of behaviors with long-term implications" (p. 192). These behaviors include anxiety disorders such as depression, eating disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, substance use disorders, truancy, dropping out of

school, teen pregnancy, bullying, and violence (Elias et al., 1997). When these behaviors go unaddressed and their effects not considered, they compromise a student's academic learning. Zins et al. (2007) maintains that our educational system must support students holistically in order to address the SEL challenges that obstruct students' abilities and capacities to connect to and perform in schools. Research over the past decade claims that students *with* SEL competencies have increased academic achievement, enhanced problem-solving skills, and higher levels of engagement in more prosocial behaviors with fewer conduct and interpersonal problems (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones, D., et al., 2017; Hagood, 2015). In summary, research shows that students' academic learning strongly benefits from the development of SEL skills, as healthy, attentive children focus more on classroom content.

Dusenbury and Weissberg (2017) support these findings. A meta-analysis of follow-up studies of 82 SEL interventions found the benefits of SEL to be durable over time and across diverse samples. Specifically, SEL programs and interventions implemented at the elementary school level effectively promoted academic achievement, improved positive behaviors, and reduced conduct issues. As evidenced by follow-up interviews, students continued to show positive achievement, and that they used SEL competencies after graduating from high school. Learning SEL competencies benefited students not only in the classroom, but also in their ability to be college and career ready for the future.

An additional study of 753 children from low-socioeconomic neighborhoods showed that, "perceived early social competence at least serves as a marker for important long-term outcomes and at most is instrumental in influencing other development factors that collectively affect the life course" (Jones et al., 2015, p. 2289). These outcomes included a greater likelihood

of graduating from college, more positive work and family relationships, better mental and physical health, and reduced criminal activity (Jones, et al., 2015; Jones & Kahn, 2017).

Our review of these empirical studies strongly suggests that educating our students on SEL competencies, supporting students to practice them, and allowing students to experience the long-term benefits of their impact are essential to success in today's schools. However, SEL development in adults, as it relates to improved relationships, productivity, and feelings of satisfaction in the workplace, is not a priority in leadership practices or research (Patti et al., 2015; Brackett & Salovey, 2006). We assert that adults can benefit from the acquisition of these competencies, especially knowing that if leaders and staff model and/or promote them, then students are ultimately more likely to internalize their importance, and use them to their advantage, too.

SEL for Staff

Further bolstering our argument for the systemic integration of SEL for adults in districts and schools, research conducted through CASEL maintains that district and school-based staff must develop their own SEL competencies. In support of these competencies as necessary in the workplace, CASEL (2017) stated that individuals need "…the ability to use SEL practices in life and on the job" (p. 1). With an increased focus on SEL in schools, the field of education needs all stakeholders, specifically leaders, teachers, and mental health staff, to continue to develop their own SEL competencies as well as be given the professional training to do so.

Brackett et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study in England that measured 123 teachers' emotion-regulation ability (ERA). Specifically, these researchers found a positive relationship between the emotion-regulation abilities of teachers and their job satisfaction as well as their sense of personal accomplishment. Moreover, they found that teachers with higher ERA

experienced greater levels of principal support and had better relationships with colleagues. Additionally, Jennings and Greenberg (2009) acknowledge that research (Goleman, 1996) over the past few decades has informed the education profession to promote teachers' SEL competencies. However, Sutton and Wheatley (2003) point out that, "researchers also know little about how teachers regulate their emotions, the relationship between teachers' emotions and motivation, and how integral emotional experiences are in teacher development" (p. 328). Although current studies stress the importance of SEL for teachers, our study examines the need for SEL competencies to be displayed, demonstrated and actively promoted by district and school-based leaders, as they influenced the members of their organizations, including mental health staff.

In consideration of the impact teacher SEL training has on students, Reyes et al. (2012) conducted a study that involved 812 sixth grade students and their teachers from 28 elementary schools in a large urban school district in the northeastern United States. This study categorized teachers by their degree of resistance or acceptance to teaching SEL programs and named them low-, medium- and high-quality implementers. Analyses revealed that teachers who received more training and delivered more lessons, or were high-quality implementers, had more positive outcomes and felt more efficacious in their work. These findings showed that teacher beliefs, along with training and program fidelity, impacted SEL interventions and the students who received them. Leaders played an important role in ensuring that all staff received the training that they needed.

We argue that leaders need to engage in practices that model SEL competencies and/or promote opportunities for staff to develop their own skills, which ultimately impact student achievement. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) remind us that "teachers influence their students

not only by how and what they teach but also by how they relate, teach, and model social and emotional constructs, and manage the classroom" (p. 449). That being said, limited research provides evidence of effective pre-service and professional development opportunities focused on staff competencies (Brackett & Salovey, 2006). Due to the importance of SEL in schools, and the need for professional training, our study examined leadership practices and how they shaped adults' work in a district and its schools.

SEL Competencies and Leadership

In our research, we explored the integration of SEL competencies and leadership theory. The following section describes how social and emotional intelligences connect to leadership, how leadership theories and practices lay the groundwork for capability and capacity building (Cohen et al., 2007), and how social and emotional leadership is in its nascent stages. We explored the topic of leadership, as it supports our argument in understanding more deeply how leaders employed socially and emotionally competent practices in a district and its schools.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Leadership

The focus on EI, a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), gained strong momentum from the research of Goleman (2006) on emotional literacy. Since the inception of this concept, numerous studies emerged related to EI, including the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Boyatzis et al., 2011; George, 2000; Siegling et al., 2014; Walter et al., 2012). For example, Hur et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study that exclusively utilized questionnaires to explore how emotional intelligence related to leader effectiveness, team effectiveness, and organizational climate. The findings revealed that followers who rated team

leaders as more emotionally intelligent also rated them as more effective at shaping a positive climate in the organization.

Initially, corporate organizations conducted much of this EI research by seeking to align the EI of leaders with their overall performance**.** Over the past two decades, however, this work has found its way into educational leadership practices. As Moore (2009) cites in her work on school reform, "EI can be the difference between a high performing school and a low performing school, and leaders who possess high levels of EI are more skillful in leading change and cultivating commitment among their staff" (p. 23). Cai (2011) also examined empirical studies published between 1996 and 2011 to explore the relationship between the EI of principals and the turnaround of low performing schools. While Cai acknowledged further investigation was needed, he concluded that the higher the school leader's EI, the more likely teachers collaborated with each other and the greater prevalence that the leader demonstrated transformational leadership behaviors (e.g., idealized influence and intellectual stimulation). Lastly, evidence also suggested that the higher a principal's EI the greater likelihood that they utilized positive interpersonal skills including communication, conflict management, and stress management.

Also, several studies described the relationship between leadership and EI (Palmer et al., 2001; Gardner & Stough, 2002). For example, Palmer et al. (2001) concluded that the foundation for competency of transformational leadership is a person's skill to manage and monitor the emotions of themselves and others. Relatedly, Berkovich and Eyal (2015) conducted a narrative review of 49 peer-reviewed studies published between 1990-2012 that focused exclusively on educational leaders and emotions. In their analysis of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies, the researchers identified three main themes across the literature including

leaders' behaviors and their effects on followers' emotions; leaders' emotional abilities; and leaders' emotional experiences and displays of emotions. While these themes helped researchers better understand the importance of EI and leadership, we argue that schools and districts are complex systems that require not just the development of an individual leader's skills, but more importantly, the collective skills of many.

Leadership Theories and Practices

Strong educational leadership highly impacts student academic achievement (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Principals are instructional leaders, and through their directive, they set teacher expectations and influence classroom activity that impacts student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Branch et al., 2013). That being said, leaders are not only responsible for individual and collective academic successes but also ensuring the infrastructure to support these successes. Furthermore, leadership practices—what leaders think and do within the social contexts of schools—allow adults and students to grow. By extension, transformational and distributed leadership practices can be critical to the growth, progress, and success of both students and adults, and social capital theory strongly supports the benefits of colleagues interacting, supporting, and strengthening their work. Each of these theories value human relationships and encourage the development of capabilities and capacity building within the organization.

Transformational Leadership. Burns (1978) introduced "transformational leadership," as a theory based on relationships and meeting the needs of followers to help foster change within an organization. A transformational educational leader delivers a mission-centered emphasis on setting direction and vision, a performance-centered emphasis on developing people, and a culture-centered emphasis on redesigning the organization (Leithwood, 1994;

Marks & Printy, 2003). Bass (1998) used transformational leadership as a lens to view organizations, specifically how leaders impacted the behaviors and feelings of other members within the organization. Furthermore, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) extended the transformational model to include seven dimensions: (1) build school vision and establish school goals; (2) provide intellectual stimulation; (3) offer individualized support; (4) model best practices and important organizational values; (5) demonstrate high performance expectations; (6) create a productive school culture; and (7) develop structures to foster participation in school decisions.

In their study, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) examined the practices of leaders in twelve Ontario schools that displayed effective collaboration. They found that principals who utilized transformational leadership such as developing people, and setting vision, better assisted in the development of collaborative school cultures. By extension, Northouse (2016) proclaimed that transformational leaders are "concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long term-goals. It includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings" (p. 161). This focus on understanding the emotions of others and the relationships between leaders and followers reflected the integration of SEL competencies with the dimensions of transformational leadership.

Hackett and Hortman's research (2008) sought to understand a relationship between SEL competencies and the behaviors associated with effective leadership performance. In this study, researchers analyzed any relationships between the four domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management and four transformational leadership behaviors. Specifically, researchers focused on the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. With data collected from self-reports of both instruments, they found that emotional competencies were

related to these transformational leadership dimensions. Thus, it makes sense for researchers to explore how leadership practices, such as those identified by the transformational leadership theory, model or promote SEL competencies.

Furthermore, in relation to transformational leadership focused on developing people, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) asserted that "capital has to be shared and circulated" and further state that, "groups, teams, and communities are far more powerful than individuals when it comes to developing human capital" (p. 3). This focus on developing people through collaborative structures relies on leaders utilizing, modeling, and promoting the SEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. In addition to transformational leadership, social capital theory further extends the fundamental importance of colleagues' relationships to support their work.

Social Capital. Bourdieu (1985) and Coleman (1990) first introduced the social capital theory by acknowledging that the relationships and interactions between people can serve as a resource for them. Leana (2011) conducted a large-scale, quantitative study in New York City that analyzed the work of staff in relation to student achievement. Leana found that "teachers were almost twice as likely to turn to their peers as to the [outside] experts designated by the school district, and four times more likely to seek advice from one another than from the principal" (p. 33). Moreover, when teachers engaged in more frequent conversations and expressed positive relationships with their peers, students showed higher achievement gains. This showed the importance of collegial relationships grounded in trust and sharing of practices to support improvement as well as the understanding that the formal school leader cannot solely bear the responsibility of supporting and coaching staff.

In addition to Leana's findings, Minckler (2014) enhanced social capital theory by emphasizing that strong relationships provide value to individual members and the collective organization. In her quantitative study, Minckler (2014) explored the relationship between school leadership and the development of teacher social capital through a convenience sample of thirteen schools in two school districts in southeastern United States. One major finding of this study suggested that the transformational leader played an essential role "in developing the structures, both physically (e.g., shared scheduling time) and culturally (e.g., norms of collegiality) that create opportunities for groups of teachers to work together to create and use teacher social capital" (p. 672). This shows that formal leaders play an important role in creating essential, supportive contexts for leaders and staff to interact within the school day.

Distributed Leadership. Distributed leadership theory focuses on how multiple leaders in an organization interact with others in a specific context to create leadership practices. Spillane et al. (2004) states, "rather than seeing leadership practice as solely a function of an individual's ability, skill, charisma, and/or cognition, we argue that it is best understood as a practice distributed over leaders, followers, and their situation" (p. 11). This theory supports the importance of increasing capabilities and capacity for change within the organization by considering the relationship of multiple leaders and followers, and their activities. As defined by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), capabilities are more than just having "adequate ability," but rather the possession of "attributes required for performance or accomplishment" (p. 55). Additionally, Mullen and Jones (2008) referred to capacity in their work as "enabling the growth of teachers as leaders who are responsible for their actions" (p. 329). In many schools, leadership is not just the job of one person, but rather a "web" that includes district, school, and teacher leaders engaged with a variety of different colleagues and contexts.

In considering a distributed leadership model, we argue for the importance of knowing where the key relationships reside and understanding how leaders emerge from amongst the staff. When leadership is viewed from a distributed perspective, the analysis of power relationships inevitably changes (West et al., 2000) and distinctions between leaders and followers blur (Gronn, 2003). Staff leaders, who are content experts (e.g., subject-area teachers), do not always hold positional authority such as that of a supervisory administrator. This means that an evaluative approach during interactions is not the driving dynamic between them. Due to this potential dynamic, staff leaders influence the organization's leadership practices by focusing on those skills (e.g. listening) that enhance relationships between colleagues.

In one empirical study, Timperley (2005) observed literacy instruction in seven elementary schools and examined its impact on student achievement. Timperley found that the followers who did not respect their designated positional leaders, sought out their peers as teacher leaders. These teacher leaders were not appointed by the school or district, but organically rose as leaders within the situations in which they worked with colleagues. Followers selected colleagues based on camaraderie and like-mindedness (i.e., not necessarily content expertise) which ultimately led to ineffective leadership practices. We acknowledge that this research showed that peer interactions did not result in positive outcomes that impact productive adult collaboration and student learning.

In much of our research, we identified leaders as both those who were hired and appointed formally and those who assumed the role amongst their colleagues informally. We also considered the leader's level of administrative and/or content expertise in relation to those staff members following them. In a distributed framework, the interdependencies between leaders, followers and a situation, and who the follower sees as a leader, can influence what

leadership practices emerge. For leaders to act in ways that support increased staff effectiveness, they must consider their practices, and how they foster situations that build capabilities and capacity amongst staff (Cohen et al., 2007). We believe that socially and emotionally competent leadership practices will result in stronger collaborative and collegial relationships that yield greater feelings of sensemaking, collective efficacy, resilience and well-being.

Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership

Due to the importance of SEL competencies in adults, and the role leaders play in building staff capabilities and capacity within their districts and schools, we turn to the current literature on leadership development that integrates SEL into its practices. Goleman's work (2006) deepened our research by naming explicitly that social intelligence should be included when thinking about effective leadership practices. Goleman (2006) observed that "a more relationship-based construct for assessing leadership is social intelligence, which we define as a set of interpersonal competencies" (p. 76). This construct considers how the actions of leaders, and their relationships with staff, impact a school environment.

Relatedly, Berg (2018) distinguished that leaders should "engage in collaborative problem solving around key school-wide issues, using protocols that engage team members in generating multiple perspectives . . . and resolving decisions in a way that allows everyone with relevant knowledge to contribute" (p. 83). This illustrates how leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies enhanced opportunities for collective decision-making amongst staff, and how it allowed for shared responsibility in reaching district and school goals. In response, we explored further how school communities are shaped by district and school-based leadership practices that may, or may not, model and/or promote social and emotional competencies. We

seek to deepen knowledge in this field about how these socially and emotionally competent leadership practices existed within various aspects of a district and its schools.

Administrators build their organizations by sharing leadership responsibilities with their staff. Patti et al. (2015), stated, "school leaders have a great opportunity to impact student growth and achievement by shaping a culture that cultivates motivated, engaged, and effective teacher leaders" (p. 438). Additionally, they asserted that districts and schools must invest in high quality leadership development to create and sustain teacher leaders and school success (Patti et al., 2012; Sparks, 2009). As described, transformational leadership, social capital and distributed leadership all argued in favor of building staff capabilities and capacity throughout an organization. Furthermore, we argue that as leadership responsibilities spread, administrators build structures within their schools that allow for staff to work independently of them, and that staff consider both their own personal well-being and that of others.

Conclusion

Prior research on social and emotional intelligences and learning has established the importance of SEL for students, both in terms of personal health and academic learning. Yet little of this research has focused directly on the adults that work with these students. School-based staff face increasing pressure to serve as role models to students in the ways in which they behave and possess the core competencies expected in their practices. In support, district and school-based leaders recognize the need to strengthen the SEL competencies of adults, although further research is needed to understand the most effective practices to move the work forward.

The importance of district and school-based leadership is seen both in theory and practice. Transformational and distributed leadership theories both place an emphasis on leaders developing people and/or practices within the organization, and social capital theory highlights

the importance of understanding the working dynamic between them. Leadership practices, as they are implemented in districts and schools, are important in shaping the ways in which adults feel, act and perceive their work in schools.

As we continue to implement education reforms intended to close achievement gaps, we strongly believe in the need to prioritize a focus on the development of socially and emotionally competent leadership. Cherniss (1998) writes that "to be successful, educational leaders must be able to forge relationships with many people. They need to be mediators and mentors, negotiators and networkers. In short, educational leaders need to be more emotionally intelligent" (p. 26). We argue that leaders need to integrate SEL competencies into their leadership practices that influence staff behaviors. Although research is currently limited, our study contributes to the field by exploring how SEL competencies are integral components of what leaders think and do, and how they understand and shape their staff's work.

Our research study focused on both social and emotional learning and leadership by identifying key leadership practices, understanding how these practices modeled and/or promoted SEL competencies and skills for adults, and further showing how these practices shaped a district-wide focus on SEL, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, staff resilience and wellbeing, and the work of mental health staff. We aimed to contribute to the SEL field by understanding the actions of leaders and how they shaped a district and its schools. The goal of our study was to encourage leaders to integrate social and emotional learning competencies into their practices in order to support the positive perceptions, sensemaking, productivity, and wellbeing of adults.

The research questions for our individual studies, as outlined in Table 1.3, reflect how each piece of our work contributes to the greater field.

Table 1.3

Overview of research questions by individual researchers

Name	Individual Research Questions
Conners	1. How do district leaders support school-based leaders as they make sense of district-wide focus on SEL? 2. How does a district-wide focus on SEL shape school-based leadership practices? 3. What leadership practices, if any, model social and emotional learning competencies?
Rose	1. What school-based leadership practices, if any, model social and emotional learning competencies? 2. How do these school-based leadership practices shape the sources of collective efficacy?
Ito	1. What school-based leadership practices, if any, model social and emotional learning competencies? 2. How do these school-based leadership practices shape the ways in which adults collaborate?
Tobin	1. What leadership practices develop and support the resilience and well-being of school-based staff? 2. How do these practices relate to promoting SEL opportunities for staff in school settings?
Renda	1. How do school-based leadership practices promote social and emotional learning opportunities for mental health staff in schools? 2. How do these school-based leadership practices shape the work of mental health staff in schools?

CHAPTER TWO[2]

Research Design and Methodology

Our study identified leadership practices that modeled social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults, while investigating how those leadership practices shaped a district and its schools. While our collective study examined this phenomenon, our individual studies examined leadership practices through a variety of theoretical and conceptual lenses (see Table 1.1).

This chapter outlines the methodology of our larger, collective study. Collaboratively, the team of five researchers designed the protocols for collecting and analyzing semi-structured interview data. Data collection and analysis unique to the individual studies are outlined in those respective chapters. The sections to follow describe our individual researcher positionality, the overall study design and site selection, our common data collection procedures, and an overview of the data analysis the team used.

Researcher Positionality

As a team of researchers conducting a qualitative case study, we recognize that we are the data collection instrument. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that our backgrounds and experiences are important variables that may affect the research process. We are all district or school-based leaders, in public school districts in Massachusetts, with a belief in the importance of socially and emotionally competent leadership practices. It is because of this belief that we seek to understand how leadership practices model and/or promote SEL competencies and skills for adults, and further investigate how those practices shaped a district-wide focus on SEL, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, staff resilience and wellbeing, and the work of mental

[2] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach to this project: Michele M. Conners, Mark T. Ito, Adam Renda, Geoffrey Rose, and Donna Tobin.

health staff. This reflects the likelihood that our own subjectivity could come to bear on our study and report findings. The data collection and analysis methods described below demonstrate the steps we took to remain objective throughout the process and present trustworthy findings.

Study Design

In order to identify leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults, while investigating how those leadership practices shaped a district and its schools, we utilized a qualitative case study methodology. The qualitative case study method suited our research process because our unit of analysis was a single school district in Massachusetts, or a bounded system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). More specifically, we employed an instrumental case study. Stake (1995) defines an instrumental case study as one in which the issue is dominant, and studying the organization will enable the researchers to gain insight into a particular issue, redraw generalizations, or build theory. Thus, this methodology was appropriate for our study, because investigating the *issue* of leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults, was of greater significance than investigating the *case*, or the school district as a whole (Stake, 1995). The instrumental case study method enabled our team to provide a narrative, or "thick description" (Mills & Gay, 2019, p. 8) of the school district in relation to our research questions.

Site Selection

Recently, the National Association of State Boards of Education highlighted Massachusetts as a state committed to social emotional learning (SEL) for both students and adults (Long, 2019). Supporting students' SEL is one of five Core Strategies identified in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Strategic Plan (2018). While adults are not specifically mentioned in the plan, Massachusetts' standards for

High Quality Professional Development require professional learning experiences to be grounded in strong SEL practice (Long, 2019). A recent study on SEL initiatives, which included Massachusetts, found that SEL initiatives must be "championed at the district level and tailored to each local context, in order to build on existing success" (*Opportunities for Massachusetts, Lesson for the Nation,* 2015, p. 16).

Given that SEL is a DESE priority for school districts, the research that supports the importance of developing SEL in educational leaders and students alike, and our roles as educational leaders in Massachusetts school districts, we felt it was important to examine the link between SEL and leadership in a school district in Massachusetts. This interest led to our goal of investigating leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults. Therefore, a key criterion in selecting an instrumental case for our research was that the district demonstrated a focus on SEL, specifically a mission, vision, and/or strategic plan that articulated a focus on SEL across the district. We conducted our study in a mid-sized school district of 10-15 schools with a multi-tiered leadership structure across the district and its schools. Specifically, our instrumental case study took place across six schools within a suburban school district of approximately 6,000 students and 410 teachers.

Data Collection

As a qualitative methods approach, our individual studies relied on data collection from document reviews, a questionnaire, observations, and semi-structured interviews. Table 2.1 outlines the data collection methods utilized by each researcher for their individual study. The variety of data collection formats enabled us to both confirm and triangulate findings during our data analysis, as well as enrich our collective understanding of the research problem within a specific district context (Creswell, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Across all studies, we used

semi-structured interviews. Sub-study specific data collection and analyses methods for document reviews, observations, and the questionnaire are found in the respective chapters of those researchers who utilized each data source (see Chapter 3).

Table 2.1

Overview of data collection methods by individual researchers

Data Collection Method	Researcher
Semi-structured interviews	Conners, Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin
Questionnaires	Ito Renda, Rose, Tobin
Document Review	Conners, Renda, Tobin
Observations	Ito, Rose

Semi-structured interviews

We conducted semi-structured, face-to-face individual interviews from September 2019 to December 2019. Table 2.2 lists interview participants by position, and the studies that utilized each data source. The use of our semi-structured interview protocol allowed flexibility to respond to the interviewee with additional probing questions as the dialogue occurred (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interviews helped us gain an understanding of the extent to which a district-wide focus on SEL influenced leadership practices across multiple domains. The focus of the interviews enabled interviewees to highlight their experiences around leadership practices, and their perceptions of how leadership practices shape a district and its schools, specifically around a district-wide focus on SEL, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience, and the work of mental health staff. The interview protocol ensured consistency in the process,

and our research team utilized the protocol with all interview participants and ensured that we asked the same questions of each participant.

Table 2.2

Interview Subjects

Participant by Role	Number	Researchers who Utilized Each Data Source
Superintendent of Schools	1	Conners
Director of Social Emotional Learning	1	Conners
School-based Leaders	9	Conners, Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin
Teaching and Learning Directors	3	Conners
Teachers	20	Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin
Mental Health Staff	10	Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin

Semi-structured interview protocol. We developed semi-structured interview protocols for district leaders (see Appendix A), school based-leaders (see Appendix B), and teachers and mental health staff (see Appendix C) to explore the extent to which a district-wide focus on SEL influenced leadership practices from the perspectives of both school-based leaders and other school staff, specifically teachers and mental health staff. We developed the protocols collaboratively by including specific questions to address our individual studies as well as the broader focus of the larger study. We piloted our interview protocol with district leaders, school-based leaders, and teachers outside our case study district. This process ensured that our interview items were clearly and respectfully worded in an effort to elicit relevant responses.

Additionally, piloting the protocol helped us identify and correct potential problems and ensure we stayed within a one-hour time frame (Singleton & Straits, 2018).

Participant Selection. To select participants, we used purposeful sampling, which is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). This method of sampling is most effective when a limited number of people can serve as primary data sources due to the nature of study. Utilizing purposeful sampling, we selected our interview participants from four categories: district leaders, school-based leaders, teachers, and mental health staff. Purposeful sampling helped us discover, understand, and gain insight from a sample of participants from whom we felt the most could be learned relative to our research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because we focused on leadership practices, it was important to not only interview district and school-based leaders, but also teachers and mental health staff who work with those leaders. The interview participants reflected a typical sample of district and school-based leaders, as well as teachers and mental health staff, that were common to public school districts in Massachusetts.

Participant Recruitment. In August, we met with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, and the Director of Social Emotional Learning and School Counseling. This afforded us the opportunity to discuss the scope of both our collective and individual studies, as well as who they felt should be interviewed at the district level. After meeting with the Superintendent's leadership council to explain our study needs and gather information on the various populations of each school, we selected four of the six elementary schools, and both middle schools, for the study. We focused on the four elementary schools based on district programs housed within the schools, as well as student demographics,

providing us a diverse student population. Research team members coordinated their independent school visits with the principal in each building. We contacted each of the six school-based leaders through email, explained the scope of our collective and individual studies, and invited them to participate in a series of interviews. All six school-based leaders agreed to participate. All interview participants received a confidentiality statement and signed an informed consent, at the time of the interview.

Interview Process. Given the nature of our individual studies, each school-based leader was interviewed twice, once by a pair of researchers and once by an individual researcher. This ensured all of our individual questions were addressed in addition to our collective questions, as well as a means to ensure consistency in our interview process. On average, the interviews lasted 40-60 minutes. We recorded and transcribed all interviews and reviewed transcriptions for accuracy. Since only one researcher collected data specific to district leaders, that round of interviews was completed prior to interviewing school-based leaders. This enabled the other four researchers to complete their interviews with school-based leaders first, share the transcripts from those interviews with the individual researcher, and provide that researcher an opportunity to focus on questions related to her individual study. Throughout the interview process, we shared our interview transcripts and checked in as a group to ensure our use of questioning and prompting was eliciting the data necessary to explore our research questions.

Data Analysis

Creating meaning and making sense of the data is the main purpose of qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Creswell (2014), data analysis consists of "... 'taking the data apart' to determine the individual responses, and then 'putting it together to summarize it'" (p. 10). Data analysis guided our identification of leadership practices that

modeled social and emotional learning competencies, and/or promoted social emotional learning opportunities for adults. Further analysis supported our work to investigate how those leadership practices shape a district and its schools. Ongoing data analysis required us to continually revisit and reflect upon the data we collected (Creswell, 2014). Further, data analysis involved assigning meaning through codes, themes, or other categorization processes, as we moved through the data and towards the answers to our research questions (Saldaña, 2016). Individually, researchers kept analytic memos to document the coding process, field notes, and reflections to aid in a thorough understanding and analysis of our data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Creswell (2014) suggests including the following steps in the process of qualitative data analysis "...(a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (b) gaining an overall sense of the information by reading through data, (c) coding the material into categories, using a descriptive term to label the topics, and (d) using the coding process to produce an explanation of the background or people as well as categories or themes for analysis" (p. 193). Following these steps, or variations thereof as appropriate for each individual study, provided us with a structured process of analyzing the textual data we collected. Specific data analysis processes, connected to our individual studies, can be found in the corresponding chapters, as each researcher employed a variety of methods and coding processes to analyze their data based on the research questions and conceptual framework of their study (see Chapter 3).

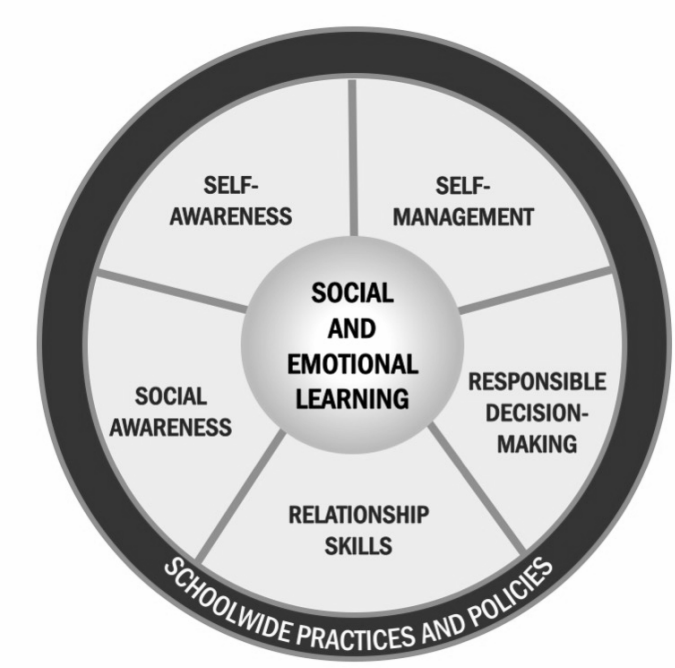
The CASEL framework (Figure 2.1) provided a model for our unit of analysis, and conceptually grounded our individual studies. The five CASEL competencies (see Table 1.2) served as the lens for identifying leadership practices that modeled or promoted SEL competencies, guided and facilitated our understanding of the data, and established our initial categories for data analysis. After transcribing the interview data, each researcher read through

the transcripts and identified leadership practices, defined as what leaders think and do. Once the leadership practices were identified, we applied our *a priori* codes to those practices for our initial cycle of coding. Our *a priori* codes, or the codes we identified before examining our data (Saldana, 2016), are based on the skills and competencies within the CASEL framework: self-awareness (SA), self-management (SM), social awareness (SOA), relationship skills (RS), and responsible decision-making (RDM). We re-examined the initial categories to further focus our data to reveal subsequent patterns or categories. Re-examining the initial categories helped us understand if the identified leadership practice modeled (i.e., displayed or demonstrated) or promoted (i.e., actively encouraged) SEL competencies. Our coding manual can be found in Appendix D.

Since each researcher identified their individual conceptual framework and research questions, additional coding was completed specific to the individual study (see Chapter 3).

Figure 2.1

CASEL Social Emotional Framework, 2017



Triangulation. Across the five individual studies, data collection methods involved semi-structured interviews, document review, observations, and a questionnaire. Given the variety of data collection methods, we were able to compare and cross-check our data with one another, providing both investigator and data triangulation (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation involves researchers' (investigators') cross-checking information and conclusions with one another through the use of multiple procedures and sources (data) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The use of multiple methods of data collection within and across our individual studies enabled us to confirm information we heard in interviews alongside information we read in documents, witnessed in observations, or gathered through questionnaires during the course of our individual data analysis. The ability to triangulate our data and findings was one way we addressed the trustworthiness of our findings.

Trustworthiness. As a team of researchers, we took several steps to ensure our findings were trustworthy. Merriam (2009) and Mills & Gay (2019) suggest multiple strategies to support trustworthiness. Among those strategies, we identified triangulation, adequate engagement in the data collection, researcher's position (reflexivity), peer review, and rich, thick descriptions as those strategies that support the trustworthiness of our study.

As discussed previously, we triangulated our data through the use of multiple investigators and data collection methods. We engaged deeply in data collection from September through December 2019 through the semi-structured interviews, document review, observations, and questionnaires to ensure our data was saturated. We recognized data saturation when we began to see and hear the same information repeatedly and were not uncovering any new information (Merriam & Tisdell 2016).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) define reflexivity as "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (p. 183). As a team of district and school-based leaders, we recognized that we hold assumptions about educational leadership, and that those assumptions could have an impact on our role as a human instrument in the research process, so it was important that we engaged in ongoing discussions central to our assumptions and biases.

Because this study was conducted by a team of researchers, peer review was ongoing. Throughout the course of data collection and analysis, we discussed the processes we were following, compared our emerging findings against the raw data, and developed tentative interpretations of those findings. These ongoing, evolving discussions enabled us to identify gaps in our understanding of the data as well as confirm our common findings across studies.

Finally, our study created a "rich, thick description" (Merriam, 2009) of how a school district's leadership practices modeled social emotional learning competencies, or promoted social emotional learning opportunities for adults, and how those practices shaped the district and its schools. This description of the study's setting, participants, and findings support the possibility of the study "transferring" to other settings (Merriam, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE [3]

Promoting Staff Resilience and Well-Being Through SEL Opportunities

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to (1) identify leadership practices (i.e., what leaders think and do) that developed and supported the resilience and well-being of school-based staff; and (2) examine how these practices promoted social and emotional learning (SEL) opportunities for staff. The terms "staff" and "teachers" are used throughout this study and encompass all professional staff who work with students; this includes classroom teachers, special education teachers, English learner teachers, and mental health and guidance staff. In this study, I define resilience as "the ability to adapt to adverse conditions while maintaining a sense of purpose, balance, and positive mental and physical wellbeing" (Sergeant & Laws-Chapman, 2012, p.14). Day and Gu (2014) note, "It is impossible to consider teacher resilience without discussing stress, and it is also necessary to consider well-being, since a sense of negative or positive well-being clearly plays a role in both" (p. 31). Resilience, Latin for "leaping back," involves thriving despite adversity and not simply surviving a situation (Beltman, et al., 2011). This may be especially true for teachers, because "to teach, and to teach at one's best over time, has always required resilience" (Gu & Day, 2011, p. 22).

There is an abundance of research that examines how teachers develop the social emotional competencies (SEC) of students but little that explores the SEC of teachers, themselves. Teacher SEL, however, matters: "there is good reason to believe that social and emotional competencies like managing emotions and stress are needed more today than ever before" (Jones, et al., 2013, p. 62). As Jennings and Greenberg (2009) explain, "When teachers

[3] This chapter was written individually by Donna Tobin

lack the SEC to handle classroom challenges, they experience emotional stress. High levels of emotional stress can have an adverse effect on job performance and may eventually lead to burnout" (p. 496). This study contributes to the limited research that identifies leadership practices that build adult resilience and promote SEL opportunities for school-based staff. My research was guided by the following questions:

RQ1) *What leadership practices develop and support the resilience and well-being of school-based staff?*

RQ2) *How do these practices promote SEL opportunities for staff in school settings?*

Conceptual Framework

Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) prosocial classroom mediational model is widely used to frame the importance of teachers' social emotional competences and well-being and how those competencies lead to classroom practices that foster positive student outcomes. They propose that, "teachers with higher SEC will implement social and emotional curriculum more effectively because they are outstanding role models for social and emotional behaviors" (p. 493). What is missing from their model is how teachers develop these competencies and what school leaders can do to promote SEL opportunities for teachers and support teachers' resilience and well-being given the high-demands and stress of teaching (Osher, et al., 2016). We know teaches are stressed as 46% of teachers reported high daily stress. this is tied with nurses for the highest levels of daily stress at work (American Federation of Teachers, 2017). Pretsch, et al (2012), found that resilience can buffer the stress of teaching and contribute to greater well-being and job satisfaction for teachers. Evidence from the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) program, a mindfulness-based professional development program designed to reduce stress, promote SEC and improve teachers' performance and classroom learning

environments, supports these findings and suggests that improvements in teachers' well-being, efficacy, burnout and mindfulness (all related to SEC) improved student outcomes (Jennings, et al., 2013).

If we are asking teachers to support students' well-being and ensure that students have good SEL opportunities, we need to ask the same of school leaders in relationship to their staff. Hargreaves (1998) argues that given the very high demands placed on teachers, it is surprising that they rarely receive specific training to address the importance of social and emotional issues in the classroom or how to develop their own SEC to successfully handle the challenging demands of teaching. Little research has examined the development of teachers' SEC within teacher preparation or district-based programs and the essential role of teachers' SEC in successful implementation of SEL programs for students is often overlooked (Jones, et al., 2013). "Because of the inattention to leadership practices, frameworks for studying leadership activity are scarce" (Spillane, et al., 2004, p. 4). My framework expands upon the existing prosocial classroom model to include school leaders and the practices they engage in to support teacher resilience and well-being and promote SEL opportunities for teachers (Figure 3.1). The development of my framework is supported by the literature, which focused on four areas: the importance of teachers in the development of students' SEL and SEC, the necessity of teachers' own resilience and SEC, leadership practices and teacher resilience, and current leadership theories as they relate to SEC.

Figure 3.1

Conceptual Framework

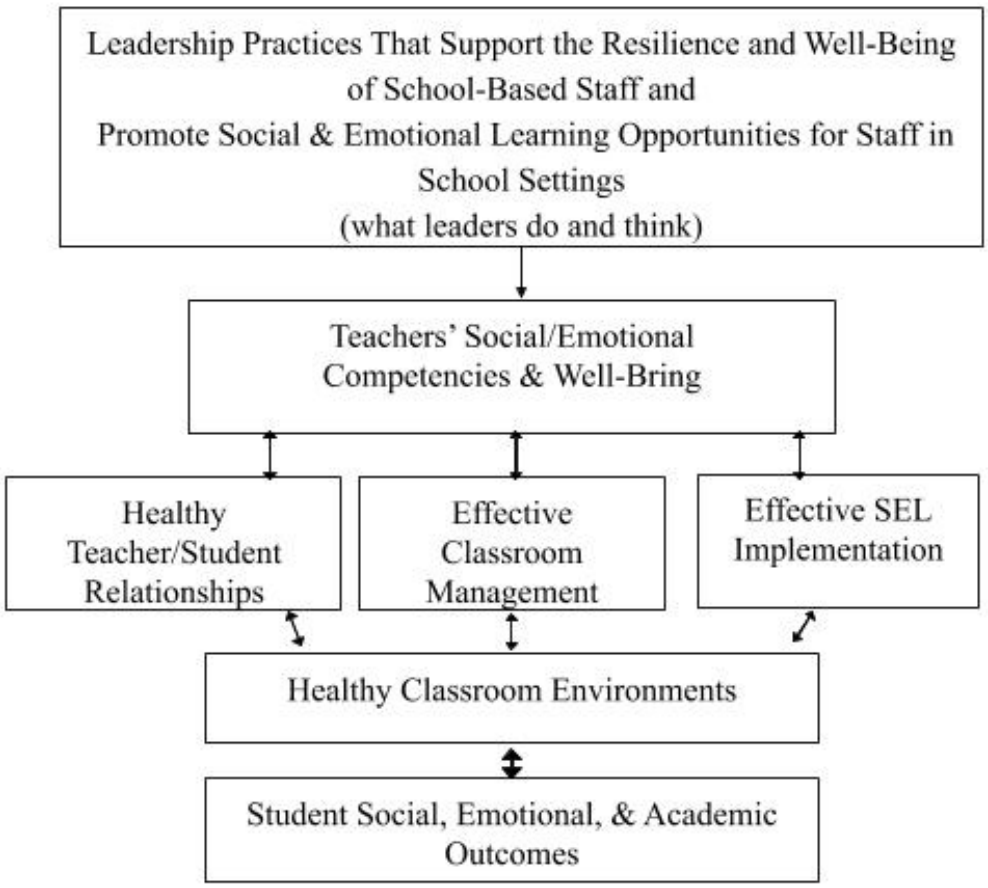


Figure 3.1. Conceptual Framework. Adapted from The Prosocial Classroom, Jennings and Greenberg, 2009.

Literature Review

Numerous studies support the practice of implementing SEL programs for students in school settings (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2013; Jones & Kahn, 2017; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins et al., 2007). For example, a meta-analysis of 213, school-based SEL programs involving 270,034 students found that participants receiving SEL programming demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance compared to students in a control group (Durlak, et al., 2011). Teachers' SEC play a critical role in students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Adults working in school settings must have strong SEC skills because it is difficult, if not impossible,

to develop these skills in students if they don't possess them themselves (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Adults, especially school-based staff, are essential to fostering SEL in students and therefore must also develop resilience. What continues to be lacking in both theory and in practice is an understanding and application of how school staff develop resilience and SEC and what leaders can do to support them.

Teachers are Critical to Students' SEL and SEC

"Teachers are the engine that drives social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and practices in schools and classrooms, and their own social-emotional competence and wellbeing strongly influence that of their students" (Schonert-Reichl, 2017, p. 137). The importance of a teacher's own social emotional competencies in implementing SEL programs and in supporting students is well documented. As far back as 2013, Jones, et al. argued that educators' SEC are vital to learning, "social and emotional competencies influence everything from teacher-student relationships to classroom management to effective instruction to teacher burnout" (p. 62). Teachers play a critical role in developing students' SEC and must believe they can teach SEL: "if a teacher does not believe he/she is competent in teaching SEL, then this will impact that teacher's ability to teach SEL (Collie, et al., 2012, p. 1191). Jennings and Frank (2015) go on to explain that:

> Given the complexity of skills and knowledge required for teachers to deliver the SEL curriculum and model SEL ideals in their behavior, teachers need to have a broad understanding of social and emotional development and how it relates to academic learning. They also need opportunities to develop their own SEC, so that they have the necessary self-awareness and self-regulation to monitor their behavior to ensure they are modeling appropriate behavior. (p. 435)

District and school leaders are beginning to recognize the important role staff play in implementing SEL programs. Findings from a national survey (CASEL, 2017) of 884 Pre-K to 12 public school principals and interviews with sixteen superintendents and ten district-level

research and evaluation specialists showed that, "implementing SEL effectively requires extensive professional development time and support from district leadership. It is essential for district and school leadership to be aligned with this approach in order to set teachers up for success in delivering SEL in the classroom" (as cited by Canfield, 2017, p.n.). This is supported by Greenberg, et al. (2017), who claim that educators' SEC matter when it comes to classroom and school climate as well as to student behaviors:

> Educators own social-emotional competence and pedagogical skills influence classroom and school climate as well as student behavior. High-quality teacher preparation and in-service professional learning related to SEC should include such elements as the theoretical knowledge and pedagogical strategies essential to teaching SEL, the development of teachers' and administrators' own personal and social competencies, and supportive feedback from colleagues and administrators (p. 23).

Teacher Resilience and SEC are Necessary

Resilience is critical for teachers to be able to develop their own SEC. In relation to the association between SEC and resilience, the vast majority of research in the area shows that people with higher SEC, specifically self-awareness and self-management, have better resilience (Beltman, et al., 2011; Gibb & Miller., 2014; Gu & Day, 2013; Leithwood, et al., 2001). For example, in one study of 696 university students, researchers found that emotional intelligence (EI) functions as a negative predictor of perceived stress through the mediating variable of resilience (Sarrionandia, et al., 2018). In their findings, Sarrionandia and colleagues (2018) found that university students who were able to identify and manage their own emotions and the emotions of others were better able to cope with development tasks despite the risk. In addition, they reported that individuals identified as having high resilience were able to recover from daily stress and adapt despite difficult or unpleasant situations. The authors suggested that intervention programs that improved both EI and resilience could be helpful in reducing perceived stress. These findings lend support to the claim that improving SEC to improve resilience and reduce

stress for university students may also be true for other adults, including teachers and other school-based staff.

Increasing resilience in teachers is critical if we want to keep our best teachers from burning out; thus, increasing teachers' SEC is imperative. Mansfield, et al. (2016), went as far as to propose their own framework for developing the resilience and well-being of early year teachers to prevent them from leaving the profession, noting that resilience-focused curriculum in teacher education programs was lacking even though evidence suggests teacher resilience is important in managing the stress of teaching (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Kyriacou, 2011; Day & Guy, 2014). And, teachers often report high levels of stress. Aguilar (2018) stated that, "Emotional intelligence is foundational to your ability to cultivate emotional resilience" (p. 54); yet when she asked teachers how they were feeling, most replied: "I'm so tired."…"I'm so overwhelmed." and "I'm so stressed." It is difficult to cultivate resilience when feeling high levels of stress; yet, this is what district and school leaders often ask teachers to do. In this study, I explored leadership practices that developed and supported the resilience and well-being of school-based staff (RQ1) and how those practices promoted the SEL opportunities for school-based staff (RQ2) to contribute to the limited existing research in this area.

Leadership Practices and Teacher Resilience

Teachers often face a variety of stresses, such as heavy workloads, relative isolation from colleagues, time constraints, emphasis on academic achievement testing, low decision-making power, deprofessionalization, and frequent lack of support from their superiors and peers (Byrne, 1998; Murray & Male, 2005; Winzelberg & Luskin, 1999). A national survey of nearly 5,000 teachers found that nearly two-thirds of teachers reported their jobs are "always" or "often" stressful, roughly double the rates of stress experienced by the general workforce (American

Federation of Teachers, 2017). Past and current research often focuses on what teachers can do to improve their own resilience and reduce their stress to prevent burnout, depression, and low-job satisfaction; yet, rarely does research focus on what leadership, professional organizations, and even government can do to alleviate these factors. Teachers are encouraged to keep a journal, practice mindfulness, exercise, expand social networks of support, meditate, sing, dance, paint, among other suggestions (Aguilar, 2012; Brown & Ryan, 2003), but asking teachers to take care of themselves is not working. We need to better understand what leaders can do to support teachers. Through interpersonal skills leaders can practice a relationship-based leadership style focusing on social intelligence, which can inspire staff to be more effective and feel more supported (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008).

Teacher burnout, stress, and low-job satisfaction continue to be major issues for many school districts and rates of first-year teachers leaving the position rose from 9.8 to 13.1 percent from 1988 to 2008—a 34% increase (Ingersoll, et al., 2014). If we want to attract the best and brightest to teaching and retain them, leaders must engage in practices that help teachers and other staff manage the social-emotional toll that teaching takes on their well-being. And when they engage in those practices, interventions must be supportive and not contrived. For example, collaboration can be viewed by staff as positive or negative depending on the culture of collaboration within the school (Collie, et al., 2012). If collaboration is based upon openness, trust, and support, and staff can collaborate based on their own needs and purposes, it can be supportive. However, if it is contrived by administrators for their own purposes it can increase administrative control and be a source of stress for teachers (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990).

Leadership, lack of autonomy, managing students' social and emotional needs without support, and lack of time are often cited as sources of teacher stress, and researchers are

beginning to look at what leaders can do to have a positive impact on teacher resilience and well-being (Richards, 2012; Kyriacou, 2001). As Bobek (2002) explained, "the promotion of teacher resiliency can enhance teaching effectiveness, heighten career satisfaction, and better prepare teachers to adjust to education's ever-changing conditions" (p. 204). But, how to build resilience is often lacking in teacher education programs and leadership practices! "Given the likely associations between resilience and teaching quality, it is all the more surprising, therefore, to find that the capacity and capability to exercise resilience in schools has been largely ignored by governments and researchers in the past who have preferred instead to focus upon problems of teacher stress, burn-out and retention" (Day, 2012).

However, some federal and state agencies are starting to consider adult SEL in their policy recommendations. In Massachusetts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is taking this task on directly by developing policies and procedures that harness the school leaders' role in supporting and empowering teachers through "adult SEL" in their schools (Long, 2019). What that looks like is still being developed. If state educational agencies are going to recommend district policies around adult SEC and hold school leaders accountable for fostering teacher resilience and well-being, school and district leaders need to ensure that they understand which leadership practices and traits improve teachers' social and emotional well-being (i.e., resilience) and promote SEL opportunities for staff to develop SEC.

Current Leadership Theories as They Relate to SEC

While there are a number of leadership theories that shape how leaders lead, two of the major leadership theories that tend to be examined by researchers and employed in school communities are instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Neither address the

leaders' impact on teacher stress, resilience and well-being and/or the promotion of SEL opportunities of school-based staff.

Instructional leadership focuses on student outcomes, curriculum, educational objectives, and teaching and learning (Blase & Blase, 2000; Hallinger, 2010). Instructional leadership, common in the 1980s and 1990, was losing its appeal by the turn of the century. By the start of the 21st century, transformational leadership was starting to become more popular and research on it was increasing. As one researcher noted, "transformational leadership evokes a more appropriate range of practice; it ought to subsume instructional leadership as the dominant image of school administration, at least during the 1990s" (Leithwood, 1992). Leithwood, along with other prominent educational researchers, continued to embrace the transformational leadership model for schools, "transformational leadership theory claims that a relatively small number of leadership behaviors or practices are capable of increasing the commitment and effort of organizational members toward the achievement of organizational goals" (Leithwood & Sun, 2012, p. 388). Making all stakeholders part of the success of a school is important, and "transformational leaders are captains who trust their crew to help design and carry out improvement (Gunn, 2018). While transformational leadership closely aligns with relationships, school climate and culture, and developing purpose, it does not specifically address teacher resilience, well-being or burnout.

Transformational leaders build trust, develop relationships, and share leadership tasks, all characteristics that relate to promoting SEL competencies. Still, transformational leadership does not explicitly focus on teacher resilience and well-being, teachers' SEL, or teachers' impact on students, but on helping staff maintain a collaborative, positive school culture; building vision; teacher professional development; working together to solve problems more effectively; and

encouraging teacher growth (Day, et al., 2016; Leithwood, 1992; Wang, et al., 2011). Ironically, there is not a lot of empirical evidence that transformational leadership practices alone have a significant impact on student outcomes.

Transformational leadership may have more in common with SEC than instructional leadership when thinking about relationships, culture, and environment, but instructional leadership seems to have more impact on students' academic performance. Robinson, et al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between leadership and student outcomes and found, "the average effect of instructional leadership on student outcomes was three to four times that of transformational leadership" (p. 635). We know that leadership practices matter, but to what extent and in which circumstances is still widely unknown. Researchers Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) concur that,

> Leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. After six additional years of research, we are even more confident about this claim. To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. (p. 9)

As we head into the second half of the 21st century, we must start thinking of new leadership theories. These new theories should ensure that school-based leaders develop and support the resilience and well-being of staff and promote SEL opportunities for adults in school settings. Leadership practices need to support teachers in adapting to adverse conditions while maintaining a sense of purpose, balance, and positive mental and physical well-being in order to ensure successful student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2019).

Current leadership theories do not address these practices; yet, we know that teachers who are extremely stressed and lack resilience negatively impact students: "stressed teachers who stay within the profession are likely to be increasingly less effective in key areas such as lesson organization, student behavior management, responsiveness to students and relationships

with parents" (Howard & Johnson, 2004, p. 401). We also know that no one leadership theory works for all situations and combined theories might have the greatest impact on all members of the school community. Day et al. (2016) provided empirical support that showed that "successful principals directly and indirectly achieve and sustain improvement over time through combining transformational and instructional leadership strategies" (p. 222).

This study seeks to better understand the leadership practices that support and develop teacher resilience and well-being and how those practices promote SEL opportunities for staff in school settings, which may in turn set the groundwork for a theory that builds and/or extends upon existing theories of leadership. As Creswell (2008) contests, "educators strive for continual improvement. This requires addressing problems or issues and searching for potential solutions. Adding to knowledge means educators undertake research to contribute to existing information about issues" (p. 4). Therefore, this study examines what leadership practices support and develop teacher resilience and well-being and how these practices promote SEL opportunities for staff to contribute to any new leadership theories that address the SEC of adults in school settings.

Methods

Data Collection

This section presents the methods used to examine leadership practices that supported school-based staff resilience (RQ1) and how those practices promoted SEL opportunities for school-based staff (RQ2). The participants, setting, and context of the overall study are outlined in Chapter 2. Below, I explain in detail the data collection and analysis methods outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Research Design Matrix

RQ1) ***What leadership practices develop and support the resilience and well-being of school-based staff?***

Data sources & sampling	**Methods**	**Analysis**	**Output**
Professional Staff (n = 31) School-based Leaders (n = 8) Document/Artifact Review (25 newsletters, 14 faculty meeting agendas with linked items, 6 school websites, 2 Twitter accounts, < 10 misc. documents/artifacts)	40–60 minutes semi-structured interviews w/professional staff (n = 31) and school-based leaders (n = 8) Questionnaire w/professional staff (n = 26) and school-based leaders (n = 8) Document/Artifact review (n=57)	Deductive coding of interviews guided by items that indicated teacher resilience and identified the leadership practices Documents were reviewed and analyzed for evidence of practices related to developing or supporting prof. staff's resilience and well-being Descriptive statistics of questionnaire items	Identified leadership practices that supported the resilience and well-being of school-based staff

RQ2) ***How do these practices promote SEL opportunities for professional staff in school settings?***

Data sources & sampling	**Methods**	**Analysis**	**Output**
Output from RQ1: Leadership practices Document/Artifact Review (25 newsletters, 14 faculty meeting agendas with linked items, 6 school websites, 2 Twitter accounts, < 10 misc. documents/artifacts)	Practices identified in RQ1 through coding and document review	Using data from RQ1, coded the findings deductively using the SEL competencies and skills as the coding guide for RQ2 Documents were analyzed for evidence of practices related resilience and well-being and promotion of SEL opportunities	Identification of how leadership practices related to resilience and well-being promoted SEL opportunities for professional staff

To answer RQ1, I used multiple data collection methods: 1) staff and leader semi-structured interviews; 2) staff and leader questionnaires; and 3) document review. Using multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research develops a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). The data collection phase occurred from September to December 2019. I describe the process in detail below.

Semi-Structured Interview

The main source of data collection for my research was semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview consisted of two protocols: one for leaders (see Appendix B) and one for staff (see Appendix C). Substantively, the protocols focused on leadership practices that modeled SEC or promoted SEL opportunities for staff and how those practices shaped the district and its schools. Each protocol consisted of sixteen loosely structured open-ended questions which allowed for probing, dialogue, and flexibility of the structure and order of the questions. Adam Renda and I conducted twenty of the thirty-nine school-based interviews (3 leaders and 17 staff). Mark Ito and Geoffrey Rose conducted the remaining nineteen school-based interviews. For my study, I identified thirty-one of the participants as school-based staff. Twenty school-based staff were teachers, which included classroom teachers, teachers of English language learners, special content teachers, and coaches. Eleven school-based staff were identified as mental health staff (MHS): social workers, nurses, and guidance counselors. The remaining eight participants were school leaders: six principals and two assistant principals.

All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed using a speech-to-text software. In addition, the research team submitted the recordings to Rev ©, a professional transcription service to ensure precision. The transcriptions were then spot checked against the speech-to-text recorded transcriptions for accuracy. I then uploaded the transcriptions into a secure file to begin

the initial data review and analysis process and finally uploaded transcripts into Dedoose ©, a cross-platform application for analyzing qualitative and mixed methods research.

At the conclusion of each interview, participants were asked to complete a short on-line questionnaire and given a link and unique personal identification number to ensure confidentiality while maintaining the ability to match questionnaire identification numbers with interview identification numbers if needed during the data analysis phase of the study.

Questionnaire

The questionnaires, one for leaders (Appendix E) and one for staff (Appendix F), consisted of twenty-five questions, nine of which were related to resilience and well-being (numbers seventeen through twenty-five). I adopted these questions from items posed on the Brief Resilient Coping Scale (Sinclair & Wallston, 2004) and the Brief Resilience Scale (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008).

Twenty-six of the thirty-one staff interview participants and all eight leaders responded to the questionnaire within a two-day period after the interviews. No data were collected to determine why some interviewees did not participate in the questionnaire. The questionnaires provided me with an additional data source to analyze staff and leaders' perceptions of leadership practices that supported teacher resilience and well-being and was used as a data source for triangulation of my analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

Document (and other Artifacts) Review

To increase the credibility and validity of the findings in the semi-structured interviews and questionnaire, I also conducted a review of documents and other artifacts. I reviewed staff newsletters, faculty meeting agendas, pertinent Twitter accounts, and each school's website for artifacts related to resilience and well-being (RQ1) and/or the promotion of SEL opportunities

for staff (RQ2). As part of my document review, I also captured a limited number of images of related documents that were visible in the schools that I visited, as well as items that participants offered to share during the interviews (i.e. one leader was discussing teacher observations and shared a teacher observation write-up with me). I examined documents and other artifacts that schools produced between August 2019 and December 2019, the period of our data collection. I used this time-frame, because I wanted the document review to reflect documents produced by the leadership team at the time of the study and intended for the staff at the time of the study. In this sense, I could compare whether the documents and artifacts aligned with the responses from the semi-structured interview participants and questionnaire respondents. For example, teachers discussed shout-outs in staff newsletters as an important form of recognition, therefore, I examined the newsletters for examples of shout-outs. I stored all documents and artifacts in a Google document.

Staff Newsletters. I received and examined twenty-five staff newsletters, representing two elementary schools and one middle school. In addition to the content in the newsletters, there were numerous links in many newsletters so that staff could further explore different topics. I included the content of these links in my document review.

Faculty Meeting Agendas. I received copies of fourteen faculty meeting agendas and I used the same process for reviewing faculty meeting agendas as I did for the staff newsletters. Any items or topics related to staff resilience and well-being and/or staff SEL were exported into the google document for review during the data analysis portion of my research. I also examined agendas for links to other sources and videos and reviewed those sources as part of the faculty meeting agenda review. I included links that related to developing and supporting resilience and well-being or SEL opportunities as part of the document review data. For example, one meeting

agenda had the link to a twenty-one minute YouTube © video titled, *How to Humor Your Stress*. Sharing this type of video with staff and discussing it at a staff meeting was an example of a leadership practice that developed and supported staff resilience and well-being.

School Websites. I examined the school websites of all six schools for any content related to RQ1 and RQ2. I reviewed principal messages, twitter accounts (only two schools had twitter accounts) and any other posted notices or documents. I took snapshots of items that might yield insights in response to RQ1 or RQ2 and placed them into the Google document.

Other Documents. During the course of my data collection, I came across artifacts hanging in school halls or displayed in classrooms or offices that reflected practices related to teacher resilience and well-being or promoting staff SEL. Examples of these items included a suggestion box where teachers could submit suggestions for teacher wellness activities, a "glows and grows" chart in the principal's office that highlighted areas of celebration (glows) from the opening of school and suggestions for improvements for next year (grows). In addition, on occasion during the interviews, principals or staff members shared documents that they thought might be related to the interview questions, and I included those documents in my examination. These items included a redacted teacher's observation write-up, a form for tracking ideas around nourishing one's self, and a mindfulness poster in a staff room.

Data Analysis

For this case study, I began my qualitative analysis with the semi-structured interviews. My analysis was loosely based on Creswell's (2008) system for analyzing data. I conducted my analysis by (a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis; (b) reading the interviews to gain a general sense of each participant; (c) coding the material into general categories, using a descriptive term to label the topics and develop inductive codes; and (d) examining general

categories to determine deductive codes for final coding and analysis. For my analysis for RQ2, I used the data outputs from RQ1 -- leadership practices that I identified as developing and supporting resilience and well-being (RQ1) and documents -- and coded them deductively using the categories and skills identified by the CASEL (https://casel.org/) to determine how the practices promoted SEL opportunities for staff in school settings (RQ2).

Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

Organizing and Preparing Data for Analysis. To answer RQ1, I first sorted all of the interviews by staff interviews and leader interviews and labeled each interview by participant identification number, school, and position (leader or staff). I labeled the interviews this way to ease sorting by category during the data analysis process. Because I did not participate in each interview, I spent time reviewing the transcripts to gain an overall sense of the number of, length of, and participants in the interviews.

Gaining a General Sense of Participants and Information. I read the transcript for each interview in which I had not participated to gain a general sense of the participant and information. During my initial read, I did not analyze any data; I simply read to get a sense of tone and overall understanding of the participants. I then re-read each transcript and deleted any extraneous information or information that was clearly unrelated to my individual study.

Coding Material into Categories. I uploaded the excerpted transcripts into Dedoose and did a very high-level sorting of the excerpts from each interview, using descriptive terms to label topics. I used an iterative process to code into broad categories based on themes I identified were developing. This process led to the data being sorted into the following inductive categories: leadership practices, this included discussions about things that leaders do or think; collaboration and/or collaborative relationships, which included relationships with leaders or colleagues;

communication, what types of things are communication and how; decision making, including any time staff mentioned feeling part of decisions or excluded from decisions; feedback, both formal and informal including recognition as well as formal evaluative feedback; health and wellness, including self-care, work-life balance, and feelings of stress; professional development, both in-district and external; school culture, including what was important to the school and or district, initiatives, overall sense of school community; supports that staff received, either by leaders or colleague and formal or informal, and trust, anytime staff mentioned trusting or not trusting leaders and or other staff. I assigned some excerpts multiple codes (i.e. if a teacher mentioned meeting with her team for support in assisting with a student, I coded that excerpt under both collaborative relationships and supports).

Deductive Coding of Inductive Categories. Finally, I reviewed the data in each of my general categories and collapsed categories that appeared to have overlap or redundancy and removed any categories that did not relate to developing and supporting resilience and well-being. This led me to four deductive coding categories under the heading of Resilience and Well-Being: Collaborative Relationships, Feedback and Recognition, Inclusive Decision Making, and Work-life Balance and Self-Care. As part of this deductive coding process, I also added a code labeled, Does Not Support Resilience and Well-Being. The code allowed me to capture items staff specifically reported as causing stress or interfering with resilience and well-being.

To answer RQ2, I used the data outputs from RQ1, namely, the practices that supported teacher resilience and well-being: collaborative relationships, feedback and recognition, inclusive decision making, and work-life balance and self-care, and conducted a deductive thematic analysis using the skills and competencies of the five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-

making. I took each excerpt coded in RQ1 and identified which SEL skills, if any, the practices promoted and coded the practices accordingly.

Analysis of Questionnaire

To support my analysis of RQ1, I examined the leader and staff questionnaires to gain a more thorough understanding of staff and leader's perception of leaders supporting staff during stressful events. I analyzed the staff questionnaires to examine staff's perception of their own resilience and well-being and how they handled or recovered from stressful situations and if their leaders supported their resilience and well-being through stressful situations. I analyzed the leaders' responses to examine if leaders felt they helped develop and support staff's resilience and well-being through stressful situations.

The questionnaire was scored on a seven-point, Likert scale. However, for the purposes of my analysis, I collapsed the three Likert scale categories of *Strongly Agree, Agree*, and *Somewhat Agree* to one category labeled "Agree" and did the same for *Strongly Disagree, Disagree*, and *Somewhat Disagree* and labeled it "Disagree." There was also an option of choosing neither agree nor disagree, which I did not collapse. I collapsed the categories, because I did not need that level of distinction between the categories. I then used the categories of *Agree, Disagree*, or *Neither t*o determine the staff's and leaders' perceptions as responding positively or negatively to a question and examined and compared the leaders' responses on how they perceived their own support of teachers and teachers' responses of their perception of leaders' support of them.

Analysis of Documents and Other Artifacts

To support my analysis of the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires for RQ1, I analyzed staff newsletters, faculty meeting agendas, school websites, and other miscellaneous

artifacts for evidence of practices related to teacher resilience and well-being (RQ1). In addition, the document review also provided evidence of ways leaders promoted SEL opportunities for staff (RQ2). As Patton (1999) notes, "triangulating data sources means validating information obtained through interviews by checking program documents and other written evidence that can corroborate what interview respondents report" (pg.1195). I began the process of analyzing the documents by: (1) sorting relevant items from each document related to resilience and well-being using the deductive codes from the semi-structured interviews: collaborative relationships, feedback and recognition, inclusive decision-making, and work-life balance and self-care, and then (2) coded those items using the five SEC: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, (3) and finally, I coded items that were then used as primary source examples to enrich my study and provided evidence to triangulate my findings.

Findings

In the following section, I discuss the findings in response to my two research questions. For RQ1, I identified four practices that leaders engaged in that developed and supported resilience and well-being. Leaders: (1) engaged in collaborative relationships with staff; (2) recognized the work of staff and provided feedback; (3) included staff in decisions; and (4) fostered work-life balance and self-care. For RQ2, I discuss how those practices promoted SEL opportunities for staff in school settings. When reviewing the findings, it may be helpful to understand my classification of quantitative terms for the number of respondents (Appendix H).

Leadership Practices That Supported and Developed Teacher Resilience and Well-Being (RQ1).

Collaborative Relationships

Leaders supported staff resilience and well-being, by providing time for staff to collaborate with colleagues and by engaging in collaborative relationships with staff. For the purpose of this study, I defined collaborative relationships as having one or more of the following qualities: two or more staff members and/or leaders and staff members coming together to support each other or seek support from each other to address the areas of problem solving; producing or creating something (i.e. policies, curriculum); or sharing work, ideas, successes and frustrations. Some leaders stated that they worked diligently to ensure staff had time together and often spent hours developing a schedule that allowed for collaboration. As one staff member reported, "Even at the highest level, leaders realize how important collaboration is so they carve out time for it." And leaders agreed that collaboration was important. As one leader explained, "I am always, always trying to bring together teachers across grade levels, to see how our work is developing. I bring staff together to learn from each other. I see learning as a collaborative process, so I want that (learning) to be done in a collaborative way."

The analysis of the leaders' interviews indicated that their main goals for collaboration time was around the work of the school, not necessarily to promote the self-care for teachers or to reduce teacher stress. Collaborative times were set up for staff to learn from each other and share ideas, to review data, discuss policies and practices, and support students who were struggling academically or social emotionally. However, leaders appeared to recognize that supporting collaborative time was a way for teachers to build supportive relationships with each other, which ultimately, they believed, contributed to a more positive school culture.

Staff agreed that collaboration supported their learning. One member expressed the benefits of collaboration as supportive to his professional growth, "Collaboration broadens my perspective. I get to learn from people with different skill sets than I have, this supports my own

professional growth." And another went so far as to say, "I think collaboration is the number one thing we do well here. Collaboration is essential to our work." Staff and leaders both agreed collaboration was important. Even more novice teachers, who might feel insecure or intimidated by their more experienced colleagues, stated that collaborative time with their colleagues supported their growth and they learned from observing their colleagues. As one teachers stated, "I'm not very good at small group instruction yet, so I observe my colleagues which is great because I learn a lot from them."

A few staff reported or appeared to recognize that this collaborative time was the result of leaders making this a priority or practice. As noted by one teacher, "They (leaders) want us to be a collaborative learning environment, first of all." Another staff member expressed appreciation for collaborative time in the schedule, "I feel the schedule has been supportive because our principal did this whole new schedule. I've been here for many years and this is the first time this has worked out where every grade-level has planning time at the same time, like every day!" Clearly, this staff member felt the practice was supportive.

Collaborating with Colleagues. Most staff stated that the time they spent meeting with their colleagues in grade level meetings, consulting with the social workers and guidance counselors, engaging with other staff members during professional development, and informal meetings and check-ins helped them manage their stress and increased their feelings of success. Staff often reported that colleagues helped support them when they were stressed. When asked about the benefits of collaborative time with colleagues, one staff member replied, "Well, stress relief is a big benefit of collaboration, also ideas on how to cope with different situations, whether it is academic or behavior. Those are probably the two biggest benefits of collaboration." A staff member in a different school responded similarly, "We're very

collaborative, helping each other curriculum wise and also just providing emotional support, if someone's feeling down." Relationships with colleagues were clearly important to many staff members' overall well-being and feeling connected to their work. One member felt particularly supported by colleagues stating, "There's no point at which I feel like I'm on my own."

In addition to time spent with grade level colleagues, staff also reported an increase in time to collaborate with guidance and other support staff. Staff noted that social workers met with them regularly which, they reported, had a positive impact on the school. Classroom teachers also noticed that social workers were collaborating with other staff as well, "So, one thing that I witnessed this year that is supportive, is the social workers are meeting with specialists." A specialist teacher confirmed this in her interview,

> There is now time for social workers to meet with specialists, which is huge because you know when you have a problem with a student and you're not sure who to call, it can be a very stressful situation. But now I feel like, okay, I've got all these people's numbers. I can text them, if I need to or they're just down the hall. And that's kind of a nice feeling to feel like . . . they have my back and I have their support whenever I need it.

While it was evident from the interviews that collaboration with colleagues was important and consistent throughout the district, a few participants also reported collaboration with leaders.

Collaborating with School Leaders. Staff shared that they looked to their school leaders as well as their colleagues when feeling stressed at work or when encountering difficult situations, from managing disruptive student behaviors to trying to handle the demands of the curriculum. When asked about collaboration with leaders, a few staff reported that leaders promoted and modeled collaboration. For example, a staff member at one school explained, "I think leaders are open to learning. There's a lot of collaboration. If the principal is struggling with something or a certain student or behavior or situation, they will look for advice or collaboration." Formal collaborative meetings between staff and leaders also existed throughout

the district. At the elementary level, leaders attended data meetings with colleagues to discuss student data outcomes and at one school, leaders and staff met in "think tanks" to develop policies and procedures for addressing a variety of issues. While not as prevalent as collaboration between colleagues, collaborative time between staff and leaders did exist. As communicated by a teacher in one interview,

> We have a new schedule now and it allows for a lot of team meeting time, which is really important. So this is the first year I've actually been able to meet weekly with all the other specialists and I also get to meet with the principal and the social workers, which is huge. So, I feel like that really helps a lot.

Collaborative relationships were important to both staff and leaders and leaders provided time for collaboration and engaged in collaborative relationships with staff. One staff member reported her principal's commitment to collaboration, "My principal is really good and collaborative, always trying to bring people together to share ideas and learn from each other."

While the vast majority of staff perceived leaders promoting collaborative time as supportive, one staff member noted that time was a major stressor for many teachers and having so much time for collaboration cut down on the time staff had with students. The decreased instructional time increased stress in terms of managing the demands of the curriculum expectations. As one veteran teacher described, "There was never enough time to begin with, and then they (leaders) took 40 minutes of curriculum time away again for more collaboration around data. Like I said, I was already struggling with it (lack of time), and now they just made it even exponentially that much worse." This teacher was concerned about having enough instructional time to prepare students for state mandated MCAS testing and the accountability standardized tests. She reported that taking more time time away from instruction was not a good use of her time.

Clearly, in this case, providing time for collaboration was not supporting or developing this teacher's resilience or well-being. Lack of time is often noted in literature as a source of teacher stress. When leaders engage in practices to support and develop resilience and well-being, it is important for them to understand their position from different perspectives. If collaboration is contrived or forced, it can be seen as a source of stress and not supportive to a teacher's overall well-being.

Recognition of Work and Feedback

Leaders engaged in practices that developed and supported resilience and well-being when they recognized the work and contributions of staff and provided staff with feedback. Many staff reported that their leaders often recognized their work both privately and publicly. For example, one noted, "I think that hearing feedback is really helpful, and I get that a lot from the leaders. The assistant principal, the principal, the social workers, they're all good at coming back and saying, 'Hey, that thing you did, that worked,' and really letting me know when I'm making improvements. It's nice." Teachers cited shout-outs in newsletters, affirmations during school announcements and communications, and notes in mailboxes, as a few ways that principals recognized their efforts. This practice promoted teachers feeling positive about their work and helped them feel good about their efforts, especially when dealing with difficult situations. Teachers reported two types of recognition and feedback: formal and informal.

Formal Recognition and Feedback. Leaders provided staff with formal recognition and feedback during the evaluation process. Staff expressed that most of the feedback was positive, and while it was nice to get positive feedback, they appreciated it when they received critical feedback, which sometimes didn't happen as often as they'd like. As revealed during one interview, "It's rare that I receive critical feedback, I feel like the message I get from people

across the board is, 'You do such a great job. You're so good at it.' It doesn't cause me to stop and reflect. I mean, that's who I am as a person, I want to challenge myself and I want to be the best I can at this job." Another reported that feedback from social work colleagues was more constructive than the formal feedback she received from her principal, she alleged that social workers seem trained to give difficult feedback, but leaders often only give positive feedback, "Everyone else (except social workers) just says, 'You're doing a great job,' which is not all that helpful when you want to know how you can improve." While some teachers wanted more direct feedback from their principals, the practice of fostering collaborative relationships between teachers and social workers, where social workers give feedback and suggestions for practice, is an important practice to support teachers. Managing challenging student behaviors contributes to teacher stress and social workers may be best suited and trained to provide feedback and support in this area.

Some staff expressed wanting more constructive feedback, yet, most staff reported their meetings with principals about feedback as a positive experience because the leaders usually said nice things about their teaching during these meetings. And, on the occasions when critical feedback was provided, it was done in a thoughtful way. As one member shared,

> I feel very positive after receiving feedback because my principal comes at conversations from a perspective of strength, which is one of her strengths. She is always identifying someone's strengths, whether it's a staff member or a kid, and really encouraging others to think from that positive strength-based approach.

Staff recognized that critical feedback, when given, was provided to improve their instruction and they expressed feeling supported by it. As discussed in another interview, "Whenever someone gives feedback to me, it's always been just to better my own teaching. Which of course makes me want to get better at teaching." Even when there were action steps for staff to implement, staff said conversations were supportive, "I have always left feeling supported, even

when there were a few action steps that we agreed on." The content of these excerpts was consistent with data from many interviews across all schools with few exceptions.

While most staff reported formal feedback as supportive, there were a few rare comments on two different principals not following time lines and getting feedback too late to make it helpful. One staff member claimed the process was not supportive,

> It was really crummy. Having the conversation was perfectly fine but I was like, 'Wow. Why are we having this conversation after this point? Like, why didn't we have this conversation earlier.' The feedback came at the end of the year, way after the observation.

It was clear the staff member was frustrated and would have preferred the feedback in a timelier manner.

Informal Recognition and Feedback. Leaders engaged in practices that developed and supported staff's resilience and well-being when they acknowledged the contributions and efforts of staff and celebrated their successes. Leaders provided informal recognition in a variety of ways, including: notes in mailboxes or on a staff member's desk, quick emails, shout-outs in newsletters or publications, social media (Twitter or Facebook) acknowledgements, or just quick verbal "thank yous" or "high-fives." Staff reported that when leaders recognized their work, especially when handling difficult situations, they felt valued for their contributions.

Some schools had regular means for leaders to recognize staff, "We have Wednesday shout-outs during announcements and in the weekly newsletter by the principal and he'll share good things people are doing, it helps connect people and feels encouraging." Another reported that leaders gave shout-outs during meetings and leaders also encouraged staff to recognize each other, "When we have our meetings, we name a teacher who's doing something we really like and we'll say out into the room what he/she is doing so there is a group share." While some of the praise was public, there were also reports of private conversations where principals

commended staff, “I feel braggy saying this, but she (the department head) always tells me that she wants other teachers to come here and see me teach.” Another shared that compliments about her classroom management felt validating, “My principal came in and saw how nicely the classroom was running. Just knowing that they're seeing the good stuff, and they're giving me compliments, it always feels good…that kind of thing. It's really that validation, in a way.” Informal feedback was given both publicly and privately, which staff appreciated. In addition, no one discussed feeling left out of receiving positive validation. Staff either did not mention principals validating their work or discussed it as having received it themselves, noticed that others had received it, or appreciated that their principal engaged in the practice.

It was reported that one leader went so far as to survey staff to find out how they best like to be recognized,

> Our administration this year sent out a survey asking, ‘How do you like to be recognized? What's comfortable to you? Would you like a card? Would you like a shout out? Would you like a hug? Would you like a high five? fist bump?’ You know, and we got to choose what we liked the best and the leaders actually have followed up on that. Pretty cool.

This practice not only acknowledged staff, but also gave them some control over how they received informal feedback and recognition. Staff reported feeling supported when they had a say in ways they received feedback as well as when they were included in other decisions related to their work.

Inclusive decision making

Some leaders included staff in decisions related to their work. When leaders include staff in decisions, staff reported they felt valued and trusted, thereby supporting staff resilience and wellbeing. During the interviews, staff provided numerous examples of times when leaders would seek out their input during meetings, through surveys, or during individual conversations. As one staff member explained,

> We all participate in conversations regarding decisions. We push each other and challenge ideas and work to make sure we are using good evidence to make decisions. I always appreciate the willingness to engage in challenging conversations, not because we disagree or to just challenge for the sake of challenging an idea, but to ensure we are making the right decision.

These data illustrated a pattern of incidents when school-based leaders sought staff input on decisions related to their work. As one elementary teacher explained: "It is rare that I'm being told what to do or that I don't have a voice in a decision," During another interview, a staff member recalled a situation that had just happened, "The principal stopped me in the hall and ask if I could stop by because she had an idea and wanted my input." Many staff stated that principals included them in decision on a variety of topics, including one member at an elementary school who said, "The principal asks for input on all sorts of stuff" and another at a different elementary school who further noted,

> Being engaged in decisions related to my work feels like it is just a natural part of the school culture, and I'm sure they (leaders) work hard on it. But it feels natural to me at this point, I feel needed . . . We're seen as experts. And so, it just makes sense that we would be part of decision making.

Most staff reported being included in decisions related to their work, with one even going as far as to claim, "the leaders have made zero decisions that affect me that I haven't been involved in." However, reports of inclusive decision-making were inconsistent across schools. There were a few staff members who explained that leaders should be more inclusive in decision-making and that when they asked for input, they should have actually considered it. As one teacher explained, "There were lots of committees and we got involved and worked our butts off to present our findings to administrators, but then they do what they want to do. It is really unfortunate because people feel burned by it." Another staff member at a different level and school had a similar claim, "They (leaders) want to hear your voice, but then they do their own thing. It's really sad." What was interesting was that some leaders agreed that they did not go far

enough in terms of including staff in important decisions, but the findings supported that they were working to improve this practice.

One leader shared that inclusive decision making was fairly new at the school and they were still working on making it more part of the school culture. This leader engaged staff in decision making as part of her practice as a leader, "I'm much more about, 'Let's make decisions together,' than previous leaders. It's a little bit of a shift for staff to be quite as engaged in decision making." In response to the questions, "Do you include staff in decision making related to the work they do," another leader responded, "Not enough." The leader went on to explain that while there are some structures in place to seek input on specific issues, the idea of dispersed leadership was not strong enough in the district. In the context of this conversation, the idea of dispersed leadership was around using staff as team leaders, committee leaders, and taking on leadership roles in staff meetings, etc., so that he wasn't the only person staff looked to in order to run meetings, make final decisions, etc.

It was difficult to determine why some members within the same school had such different experiences in terms of inclusive decision making. However, the inconsistencies in the responses provided me with a broader perspective on the topic.

Supporting Work-Life Balance and Self-Care

While not every respondent discussed leadership practices related to supporting work-life balance and self-care, leaders and staff members who did were direct and clear that leaders engaged in practices that supported work-life balance and self-care. The staff provided specific examples of leaders both modeling work-life balance and self-care and promoting it to their staff.

Work-Life Balance. Leaders supported staff members' work-life balance. Interviews from staff of veteran and novice leaders and both male and female leaders discussed a focus on work-life balance and taking care of one's family. As one leader reported,

> The simplest thing I do, I think, is just understanding that the staff are people who have lives and have needs, so I try to say to staff, 'you as a person come first, your family comes first, if someone is sick or needs you, take the time.' Something I've told staff from the beginning is, 'family comes first.' I mean as a parent and a human being, I think those are the pieces that, at the end of the day, people really appreciate even more so than the additional set of books.

Staff shared examples of leaders modeling this practice by taking time to take care of their own families as well as promoting the practice with their staff. One staff member shared what happened when a family member passed away, "There was a death in my family, the principal was like, 'Go home, you do not need to be here. Go do what you need to do. Take care of your family, and we'll take care of school." Other staff members shared very personal stories as examples of leaders promoting work-life balance, including this example from a staff member,

> My family had some challenges this year and the support was really quite great. The message from the school leaders was, 'you go take care of your people, then come on back.' This has meant a lot to me and there have been others going through cancer, family and spousal things, and the response from administration is always great. They understand that we have lives outside of school and sometimes need to be at home to take care of things.

While these examples are of leaders supporting staff members taking care of family members during a crisis or unfortunate event, staff also reported that leaders encouraged them to attend special events at their children's schools or to celebrate a special event of a family member. A few staff members shared that their school leader often attended the events at her own child's school and made sure staff knew it was okay for them to do the same, even providing classroom coverage if needed. Staff stated that recognizing that they had lives outside of school and being

able to manage stressors at home, helped them feel more supported in their work environments and respected as professionals.

Self-care. During the semi-structured interviews many staff reported a new focus on health and well-being with leaders promoting activities and training around self-care. In one school, both the school leader and staff presentation at a recent faculty meeting that included two trainers working with staff on self-care options, including yoga and mindfulness. The presenters also introduced an activity called "Nourish to Thrive," which the leader followed up on by engaging staff in the activity to increase staff's own self-awareness and self-management in the area of self-care. The activity involved eliciting a weekly commitment from each staff member to identify a "Nourish and Thrive" activity. Each week, each staff member was asked to identify one thing that he/she could do for him/herself to nourish his/her well-being. Staff members then identified others who would hold them accountable for nourishing themselves. In each of this leader's staff newsletters that I reviewed, I found a section devoted to staff tracking their success with identifying and participating in the "Nourish to Thrive" activity. In two other schools, staff talked about leaders working with trainers to show staff how to practice yoga to relax and unwind, and there were also workshops on mindfulness that staff could attend. In one school the principal set up a yoga program for staff after school and a number of staff talked about signing up for a multi-week session.

In addition to the yoga and mindfulness programs at a number of schools, one school had recently developed a new wellness committee. One of the roles of the committee was to work with staff to plan a variety of health and wellness activities, offering a variety of choices, including family events such as picnics. Leaders asked the committee to ensure options for all staff member's interests. One committee member discussed planning paint nights, bowling

parties, and social events. Document reviews also supported evidence of initiatives around self-care. There were suggestion boxes for staff input into inclusive activities, sign-up sheets for gatherings, and committees developed to specifically focus on staff well-being. These initiatives worked to support staff recognizing their own needs and being able to engage in self-care activities.

In addition to promoting self-care, one staff member recalled a practice in which her leader engaged exhibited how leaders could model and promote caring for others,

> My leader asked all of the staff if there were days in our lives that were challenging for us or difficult. I mentioned the day my mom died, and the principal wrote me a special card on that day even though she had died many years ago. I've never experienced that in a workplace.

The practices discussed in this section illustrated ways leaders developed and supported the resilience and well-being of staff members and examined ways leaders supported staff in engaging in self-care activities.

Counterpoint. While the available data on work-life balance and self-care were overwhelmingly positive, I did find that a few staff reported negative feelings around the support, modeling, and promotion of work-life balance. In one school, a respondent reported that when the principal and other staff were managing things at home and were away from school it put additional stress on the staff at school. Another member stated that when principals were modeling work-life balance, such as attending their own children's events, they were out of the school building and therefore not available to staff.

In addition, a few staff members reported that even though self-care and family care was supported by leaders, it was still difficult for them to be out of school. They stated that providing sub plans, worrying about students, and worrying about getting everything done, prevented them from taking time off for their own illness or for family events. As articulated by one staff

member, “It’s frustrating because when our principal is out for (his/her) own children’s things, like something at their school, our teachers are like, ‘I would like to go to my kid's stuff too, but I can't because I need to be here, the students need me.” Understanding why some school-based staff are able to engage in self-care and others feel the need to be in their classrooms no matter what, could be a topic for further study.

How These Leadership Practices Promoted Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Opportunities for School-Based Staff (RQ2)

In WPS, leaders provided direct learning opportunities for the staff to further develop their SEC. The majority of my findings aligned with the three competencies that include understanding and working with others: social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Because my study focused on leadership practices that supported other adults and not leaders’ development of their own competencies, the findings were typically related to competencies that supported interrelationships. However, the competencies of self-management and self-care did surface during discussions of work-life balance and self-care, which are more aligned with intrapersonal skills. Below, I identify how the practices discussed in RQ1 promote each of the competencies.

Self-Awareness and Self-Management

There was a number of practices from the findings for RQ1 that promoted SEL opportunities for staff in the areas of self-awareness and self-management, specifically as it related to managing stress and self-care. Leaders promoted SEL opportunities for staff when they provided training and engaged in conversations during faculty meetings related to stress management, when they offered mindfulness and yoga sessions for staff both in and out of school, and when they provided opportunities for social workers to support staff in developing

strategies to manage the stress of supporting students with significant social and emotional needs. One staff member summed up a number of ways leaders promoted self-care,

> This year we've had in-service, or training inside the school, with people who are specifically looking at how to support us social-emotionally. So we've had everything from yoga to life goals to mindfulness training and also coaching. We've learned a lot about that and have also been given opportunities to sign up for free sessions, which a number of people took advantage of.

These findings were heavily supported in the semi-structured interviews and document reviews, with PowerPoint presentations and training evident in staff meeting agendas and a number of staff's responses related to these activities in the interviews. Yet, the findings from the staff questionnaires were less overwhelmingly supportive. While, just over half (fourteen out of twenty-six) of the staff reported that leaders helped them develop healthy mechanisms for handling stress, fifteen out of twenty-six still reported that they often felt overwhelmed. Staff most often reported that not having enough time to do everything that needed to be done and managing students with challenging and disruptive behaviors as the two major causes of stress. Staff did report that leaders helped them deal with these situations and engaged in practices that supported their self-care and well-being; but no staff member discussed leaders working to eliminate the causes of teacher stress. Thus, while there was evidence that leaders helped staff deal with stress, there was no evidence that leaders actually worked to alleviate the sources of stress.

Social Awareness

All four of the leadership practices identified in RQ1 promoted SEL opportunities for staff in the area of social awareness, which skills include: respecting others, consideration for others' perspectives, showing empathy when others are dealing with difficult situations, and

appreciating and valuing human differences. For example, leaders provided opportunities for staff to come together to observe and discuss lessons (collaboration). One leader noted,

> I provide opportunities for teachers to observe each [other]. I might cover their class so they can go observe someone who has a specific skill. It's a lot of trying to get them out of their own classrooms to see what other good things are going on here. They can learn things by watching other people much better than they can learn by listening to me.

Through these peer observations, the staff had opportunities to learn to consider and appreciate others' perspectives, one of the skills under the social awareness competency.

Leaders also modeled skills related to social awareness. Leaders used a variety of strategies to recognize staff and celebrate the good work that staff members had engaged in (recognition and feedback). When leaders recognized staff, staff reported feeling respected, valued, and appreciated. Social awareness was promoted and modeled as well when leaders engaged staff in conversations about recognition and feedback. As one leader reported,

> I might say, 'that might not have been easy for you to hear, I'm wondering if it didn't feel so awesome for you.' I ask questions about how they are feeling about the conversation and not assume what they think. I believe this allows people to take care of their own social emotional wellness, which is important when you're conversing and working with people.

When leaders engaged staff in conversations about their feelings and showed empathy and understanding of different perspectives it promoted SEL opportunities for staff in the area of social awareness. Leaders also asked staff to share their ideas, thoughts and feelings when it came to decisions related to their work and the school. When staff were included in part of the decision-making process (inclusive decision making) they felt empowered and valued.

Relationship Skills

Including staff in decisions not only built social awareness, but also promoted learning opportunities in the area of relationship skills. When asked if leaders included them in decisions, one staff member went so far as to say, "100% of the time. I always feel included." Another

went on to explain, “It’s never, it’s rare, if ever that I’m being told what to do and don’t have a voice in a decision in something I’m part of.” When leaders engaged staff in inclusive decision-making, it allowed staff to practice skills related to relationship skills, including cooperating with others, seeking and offering help, and collaboration with team members. In addition to promoting relationship skills through inclusive decision making, leaders also provided SEL opportunities in this area when they supported collaboration, and when celebrating accomplishments and providing feedback.

Leaders promoted relationship skills during collaborative meetings by implementing group norms, defining expectations, and modeling open communication. Documents showed evidence of leaders providing frameworks for successful team building, including how to set meeting norms, how to engage in ice-breakers and ‘getting to know you’ activities, and how to communicate effectively in groups. Leaders also modeled relationship skills when collaborating with staff and during staff and group meetings. As one staff member explained during the semi-structured interview,

> The leader facilitates and encourages the conversation to happen. And I really like the way I've seen it done here specifically because the leader, the principal, so to speak, makes all the teachers feel like they are the professionals and that facilitates a conversation instead of the leader just trying to be the only person speaking.

During my analysis of the data, I came to understand more clearly that promoting SEL opportunities for staff often involved modeling those competencies as a way for leaders to promote the development of these skills in others. Leaders modeled these skills during feedback sessions. When giving feedback, it was frequently, but not always, stated that feedback was given in a thoughtful and professional way. One staff member reported that the feedback helped him grow professionally, “the feedback that I’ve received this year has been very open, really constructive, and has helped me be a better teacher.” Leaders worked with staff in a cooperative

way and engaged in supportive feedback conversations which supported resilience and promoted SEL opportunities for staff in the area of relationship skills.

Responsible Decision-Making

Responsible decision making was promoted when leaders included staff in decisions related to their work and when they promoted work-life balance and developed and supported skills around self-care. Leaders provided SEL opportunities for staff in the area of responsible decision-making by collaborating with staff to identify and solve problems and analyze situations accurately. One staff member discussed the process of decision making at her school and shared that there is always give and take and a lot of thought that goes into decisions so that, in the end, the decisions that are made are good ones. When leaders engaged staff in the process of inclusive decision making they promoted learning opportunities for staff to make constructive choices about ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms within the school building, all skills needed for responsible decision making.

Both leaders and staff reported that the district's focus on SEL for students was now, at times, being modeled and promoted by leaders. Leaders promoted SEL opportunities for staff in the areas of self-care and well-being. They provided staff opportunities to learn about self-care activities through training (yoga, mindfulness, handling stress videos) and encouraged to make responsible decisions about their own self-care, given these new skills and strategies.

A few leaders specifically shared that they had begun to shift the focus from social events that often involved going out to places to eat and drink together to more inclusive and diverse gatherings such as paint nights, yoga classes, and family picnics. Expanding options and developing committees to plan for staff engagement and socialization encouraged staff to make constructive choices about social interactions and to think about others when planning events and

making decisions. Making ethical choices, analyzing situations accurately, and making decisions in consideration of the well-being of others are all skills related to responsible decision-making, an important SEL competency for staff in school settings.

Discussion

In this section, I discuss my findings through the concepts and frameworks that I drew upon for this study and discuss how they connects to my findings: (1) the concept of resilience and well-being; and (2) the theoretical mediational model of the prosocial classroom that teachers SEL competencies matter (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

I found four leadership practices that developed and supported resilience and well-being (RQ1). Leaders fostered collaborative relationships, included staff in decision making, recognized the work of staff and provided feedback, and supported work-life balance and self-care. When leaders engaged in these practices, they promoted a variety of skills that aligned social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making and engaged in practices that supported self-care, which aligned with self-awareness and self-management (RQ2). Below I will discuss these key practices and the extent to which leaders engaged in these practices.

Leaders Engaged in Practices that Developed and Supported Resilience and Well-Being

Collaborative relationships are important. Almost all of the research on promoting resilience and well-being focuses on relationship skills and seeking support from others (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Crane, 2017). Relationships with colleagues are critical to the resilience and well-being of staff in school settings. As Gu & Day (2011) discuss in their research:

> For those in all professional life phases and all school contexts who managed to sustain their resilience, the relational conditions of their workplace contexts were reported as the most important contributing factor. Around 75% or more of resilient teachers in each of the six professional life phases rated supportive relationships with their colleagues as a

> positive critical influence on their capacity to maintain their original vocation or call to teach. (p. 29).

Leadership practices that promoted relationship skills were clearly the most evidenced by both leaders and teachers in the Westlake Public Schools (WPS) and support for collaboration was district-wide. Leaders engaged in practices that developed and supported the resilience of staff members by fostering collaborative relationships with school-based staff and between school-based staff and their colleagues. Collaboration is important for all school members and in the WPS collaborative was consistently supported, which is not always the case. In some schools, there is limited time and few resources for teacher collaboration, but in the WPS it was clearly a priority.

Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) differentiate between collaborative cultures where collaboration occurs naturally and may be seen as more positive than contrived collegiality, where collaboration is required and put into place by administrators (as cited in Collie, et al., 2012). While support for collaboration was a prevalent theme in my data analysis, it is important to note that I did not differentiate between types of collaboration as some others have done. In the WPS, a significant amount of the collaborative time was put into place by administrators (contrived collaboration). However, most school staff still discussed collaborative time as supportive. They noted time with others as a positive aspect of their school culture, including collaborative time that was provided to support inclusive decision making. While there were many opportunities to collaborate with each other and informal opportunities for collaboration between teaching staff and mental health staff, offering more formal opportunities for this type of collaboration would help teachers in developing strategies for supporting students with challenging behaviors, which we know can be as source of teacher stress.

Including staff in decisions related to their work validates the expertise and leads to higher job satisfactions. As noted in an issue brief by Greenberg, et al., (2016), "When school leaders create opportunities for decision-making and collaboration among teachers, teachers feel empowered and have higher satisfaction" (p. 4). My findings suggested both leaders and staff members in the WPS agreed that when leaders recognized staff's work and included them in decisions, they felt recognized as professionals and validation for their work.

Including staff in decisions related to their work should be a practice in which all leaders engage, because ensuring staff have a say in decisions and input and/or control over key issues, reduces the impact of stress (Verhoeven, et al., 2003). Inclusive-decision making was repeatedly highlighted as an area staff viewed as supportive and noted as prevalent in the WPS. However, on the rare occasions when staff were asked for input on decisions and that input was not reflected in decisions, staff reported feelings of "sadness" and "burnout." Feeling sad and burned out can lead to increased levels of stress. Managing stress is important because when staff members are stressed, and do not get the support they need from leaders, they can respond in maladaptive ways, which can impact their health and create climates of stress in the classrooms (Aguilar, 2018). Recognition and feedback matter to staff. According to Steele and Whitaker (2019),

> Leaders must notice the little things teachers do and recognize them for it. It is not enough to think team members are valuable; it is important to tell them. People need to know their work is appreciated, so praise your teachers often. Give them shout-outs in front of their colleagues. Thank them for little things that make the difference for their students, for their colleagues, and for the school. Never underestimate the value of encouragement (pg. 49).

Many staff members in the study noted that leaders provided positive feedback and recognized their efforts. This recognition was delivered publicly through shout-outs in meetings and in written documents, as well as privately during conversations and evaluation meetings.

Recognition and feedback are important to staff morale and staff appreciated their leaders when they recognized their work. While the findings from the semi-structured interviews supported my claim that staff appreciated recognition for their work and liked getting positive feedback during the evaluation process, it is important to recognize the full findings in relation to feedback. Some staff had hoped for more constructive feedback that would contribute to their professional growth. A few staff reported leaders did not always communicate effectively or in a timely manner, leaving staff to want more input into ways to improve their instructional practices.

Finally, support for work-life balance and self-care make a difference in the resilience and well-being of staff. As Crane (2017) notes, "access to coping resources can be as simple as allowing employees greater flexibility in their work so they can respond to stressors in their personal lives, or take breaks when needed" (p. 2). I found clear evidence from in the interviews, the questionnaire, and the document reviews that staff believed that leaders in the WPS cared about them and supported their well-being by promoting work-life balance and providing opportunities for them to engage in activities related to self-care. Staff reported that they engaged in the yoga offering after-school and took time off to care for their families and themselves when needed. Social workers also reported that at times, teachers sought them out for support and self-care and that they were able to provide resources and support.

Berkovich and Eyal (2014) reviewed a number of articles related to teacher resilience and reported that, "In interactions with staff, the principal's modeling of care in words and actions contributed to a schools' development of a culture of care" (p. 143). Leaders in the WPS provided training directly to staff to improve their self-awareness around skills related to their own resilience and well-being, including mindfulness training, yoga classes, and workshops on reducing stress. This training was done in group settings and promoted social awareness and

support for others as well as support for one's self. Aguilar (2018) suggests that, "We are social beings, and need each other to thrive. A strong, healthy community can bolster us through challenging moments and bring joy to our lives" (p. 15). This is true for students and staff. When leaders engaged in practices that developed and supported resilience and well-being they promoted SEL opportunities for staff.

The Social Emotional Competencies of Staff in School Settings Matter

As educators, we know SEL is important, not only for students but across schools, "SEL is informed by and connects to virtually all important movements and frameworks in education, including school climate, teacher stress, and equity" (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017, p. 39). Yet, neither the prosocial classroom model (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) or the most popular leadership theories address how leadership practices can develop and support resilience and well-being and promote SEL opportunities for school-based staff. Eisenberg (2003) and Ekman (2004) argue that decades of research have generated a knowledge base that can be used to promote teachers' social and emotional awareness in the development of these competencies. Unfortunately, until recently, neither teacher pre-service or in-service programs have used these resources to promote SEL competencies in teachers (as cited in Jennings & Greenburg, 2009).

In WPS all the SEL competencies were promoted to some degree. However, the skills and competencies most supported by the leadership practices in WPS were social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision making.

Leaders in the WPS allocated time and resources for staff to engage in collaborative relationships, allowing staff to develop social awareness skills. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) content that social awareness matters in school settings,

> Socially and emotionally competent teachers also have high social awareness. They know how their emotional expressions affect their interactions with others. Such teachers also

> recognize and understand the emotions of others. They are able to build strong and supportive relationships through mutual understanding and cooperation and can effectively negotiate solutions to conflict situations. Socially and emotionally competent teachers are culturally sensitive, understand that others may have different perspectives than they do, and take this into account in relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. (p. 495)

Leaders in the WPS allowed staff to have input into decisions related to their work, which promoted staff's skill development in the area of responsible decision-making skills. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) contend that leaders enhance their school communities when they provide opportunities for staff to participate in decision making about issues that affect them. In this study, when leaders included staff in decisions, staff reported feeling trusted and valued, with one staff member noting that inclusive decision making was an important part of his' school's culture.

Research also shows that a protective factor that can make a real difference in teachers' lives is for leaders to recognize and value staff achievements (Howard & Johnson, pg. 416). When leaders respect staff and show appreciation they model social awareness and relationship skills, both important SEC that Jennings and Greenberg (2009) argue teachers need to support students' SEL.

Finally, Gu and Day (2007), found that "unsympathetic leaders and unsympathetic responses to pressures at home or during a sustained illness of a child or family member would erode resilience at a time of personal or classroom crisis but strong personal support would result in the teacher sustaining resilience" (p. 1306). While not every staff or leader spoke of practices related to work-life balance and self-care, the data that did exist showed the leaders modeled and promoted SEC related to developing staff's own self-awareness and self-management by engaging in practices that supported work-life balance and promoted self-care.

Leadership practices that support resilience and well-being and promote SEL competencies are important because, "a sense of agency, a strong support group (including a competent and caring leadership team), pride in achievements and competence in areas of personal importance are all major protective factors and were all strong features of the participants' talk" (Howard & Johnson 2004, pg. 415). WPS leaders engaged in practices that had a positive impact on teacher resilience and well-being and promoted SEL opportunities for staff. Staff reported that leaders helped them through stressful events and helped them find creative ways to deal with difficult situations. And, just over half reported that leaders helped them develop healthy mechanisms for handling stress.

Leaders provided opportunities for staff to develop skills in the areas of social awareness and relationship building as well as encouraging staff to develop skills in the areas of self-awareness and self-management. Yet, there is still work to be done. As Leithwood and Riehl, (2003) contend, school leadership has a direct influence on school conditions, classroom conditions, and teachers, which, in turn, have a direct impact on student learning. Staff reported that while leaders were supportive, there was room to further promote opportunities for the development of good coping mechanisms for handling stress and dealing with difficult situations. I would also recommend that district and school leaders think about ways to reduce the actual causes of stress that teachers encounter each day. Understanding leadership practices and their impact on staff is thus critical for theory and practice.

Study Limitations

In this section I discuss the limitations of my research: (1) participant bias and limitations of self-report; (2) personal bias; and (3) document review issues (4) time constraints. Regarding participant bias, the district administrative team agreed to participate in this study and the

superintendent promoted study participation to her principals. While the principals did ultimately volunteer to participate, they may have felt pressure to do so given the district's commitment to our research. In addition, discussing one's own practices in the context of an interview may lead participants to promote or conceal their own strengths or challenges as well as those of the district. Staff participants also volunteered for this study. This sample size may not have represented the full range of views of staff members within the schools. My specific focus related to levels of stress, resilience and well-being, all topics that can be difficult for staff to recognize within themselves and to report on accurately. In addition, I am a principal and answering questions about school leadership practices with a school leader, may have heightened the complexity inherent in an interview and swayed the participant to give responses, consciously or subconsciously, that they think the interviewer wanted to hear (Shuttleworth, 2009).

In addition, my position as a school administrator may have led to my own bias. As a school administrator, I was deeply interested in the findings from this study both as a researcher and in terms of my own practice. In my work as a school leader, I have worked with many different teachers. Some of those teachers have exhibited high levels or resilience and appear to be able to handle stressful situations with little or no impact on their own physical and mental well-being. I've also worked with teachers who appear to have a very low tolerance for stress and find it hard to remain resilient when handling stressful or difficult situations. The day-to-day stresses that come along with teaching appear to have a negative impact on their well-being. My interest in the topic and the importance of these findings to my own practice may have contributed to the types of probing questions that I asked and influenced my interpretation of the data. However, I endeavored to remain cognizant of my positionality during all phases of this

study and worked to collect and analyze data and report findings that were not influenced by any bias.

The third limitation of my study was my data collection and analysis of the documents and other artifacts that I used for document review. All but one of the documents that I reviewed were documents that were widely visible within the context of the school setting (meeting agendas, staff memos, etc.) or publicly viewable (websites, items displayed in hallways, etc.). The only confidential document that I reviewed was a redacted copy of an evaluation. This item provided me with the language and structure that one principal used in one evaluation. Having multiple types of these evaluation documents would have given me a broader view of principal feedback and recognition in a different context than what was reported in the interviews. Not having access to personal communications and specific feedback was a limitation of the document review.

Finally, the time constraints of my data collection and study period only gave me information for one period of time. While my findings indicated that leaders engaged in practices that supported the development of teacher resilience, it is difficult to report if these practices actually lead to outcomes of higher long-term resilience and/or moved someone with little resiliency to being resilient over time. The practices identified would typically support the development of resilience so that over time one might see staff become more resilient, but the time constraints of this study did not allow for the collection of longitudinal data.

Even with these limitations, my findings are based on the analysis of the data and are both accurate and trustworthy. Using multiple data sources allowed for the triangulation of data and allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the findings (Mills & Gay, 2019). Because I used semi-structured interviews as my main source of data collection, it was important

to me to use additional methods of data collection to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the data and to discover and vet any inconsistencies that might have arisen during my data collection and analysis. With methods triangulation, "the researcher uses multiple methods of data collection in an attempt to gain an articulate, comprehensive view of the phenomenon" (Cope, 2014, pg. 90). Using multiple data collection methods (staff and leader semi-structured interviews, staff and leader questionnaires, and document review) increased the trustworthiness and credibility of my findings.

I took all ethical considerations related to trustworthiness and validity into account during my data collection, analysis, and reporting stages of this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that, "it is the training, experience, and 'intellectual rigor' of the researcher, then, that determines the credibility of the qualitative research study" (p. 260); to this end, my training, coursework, and mentoring from experienced researchers provided for a valid and trustworthy study.

CHAPTER FOUR[4]

Summary of Research Questions and Methods

The purpose of this study was to identify leadership practices that modeled social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies for adults and/or promoted opportunities for the SEL of staff. Our intent was to determine how these practices shaped different aspects of a district and its schools. To do so, we examined how district leaders supported sensemaking among school-based leaders around SEL (Conners, 2020) as well as the influences that school-based leaders had on adult collaboration (Ito, 2020), mental health staff (Renda, 2020), collective efficacy (Rose, 2020), and teacher resilience and well-being (Tobin, 2020).

We developed two overarching research questions that guided our collective work. Research question one (RQ1) was "what leadership practices model SEL competencies and/or promote SEL opportunities for staff?" Research Question two (RQ2) was "how do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?" Our methodology included a qualitative case study with a unit of analysis of a single school district in Massachusetts, fictitiously named Westlake Public Schools (WPS). Our study encompassed four elementary and two middle schools. Utilizing purposeful sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), we selected our interview participants from four categories: district leaders, school-based leaders, teachers, and mental health staff (MHS). For data collection, we employed semi-structured interviews, document reviews, online questionnaires, and onsite observations. To analyze the data, our team used coding software, Dedoose, and used the coded data to find patterns and themes (Creswell, 2014).

In our analytic lenses, all members of the team used the CASEL competencies which included self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible

[4]This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach to this project: Michele M. Conners, Mark T. Ito, Adam Renda, Geoffrey Rose, and Donna Tobin

decision-making and their associated skills (Appendix D) when determining the social and emotional competence of our identified leadership practices. Individually and collectively, we established that the competencies of social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making were the most widely recognized SEL competencies related to the identified leadership practices (i.e., what leaders think and do).

From our synthesis of our individual studies, we found three common themes in response to our RQ1: 1) Leaders allocated time and resources to meet the needs of individuals; 2) Leaders engaged in relationship building with staff and/or colleagues; and 3) Leaders created structures for shared responsibility amongst colleagues. We found these leadership practices shaped the district and its schools (RQ2) when leaders prioritized outside resources and time to support individual development; staff felt validated when their leaders supported their personal and professional well-being; and leaders created structures designed to access shared knowledge and decision-making. In the following sections, we present our synthesized findings, discuss these findings in relation to the literature, propose a new framework for socially and emotionally competent leadership, and discuss recommendations and implications for practice.

Synthesis of Findings

We begin the section by examining common leadership practices identified across our studies. To address RQ1, we determined if the practices modeled (i.e., demonstrated or displayed) the SEL competencies or promoted (i.e., actively encouraged) SEL opportunities. For RQ2, through districtwide examples and the existing literature, we also explored how these practices shaped the district and its schools. As a result, we make recommendations to the district on how to potentially approach these practices when implementing them in the future.

Leaders Allocated Time and Resources to Meet the Needs of Individuals

This leadership practice focused on professional development (PD) and scheduled time in relationship to how leaders allocated time and resources that affected the needs of staff. In relation to RQ1, leaders modeled and/or promoted the SEL competency of relationship skills in their practices when they worked cooperatively with others, engaged socially with diverse individuals, listened well, and communicated effectively in order to increase the professional knowledge of their staff. Additionally, when leaders allocated resources for scheduled time in their practices, they also modeled and/or promoted the competency of social awareness, because they recognized the importance of collaboration for staff and the resource of time needed for them to engage. In response to RQ2, this practice shaped the district and its schools by leaders prioritizing outside resources for learning as opposed to internal expertise; and providing time in the schedule as opposed to developing greater capacity for shared responsibility of the work.

Professional Development

Collectively, we found that leaders encouraged and supported staff to attend training, workshops and conferences in order to increase their professional knowledge. Leaders promoted opportunities for staff to seek PD in the areas related to their specific roles (e.g., instruction, mental health and/or leadership) and/or in support of higher-level district goals (e.g., SEL, cultural proficiency, and/or project based learning). District leaders also modeled and promoted this practice by encouraging participation for individual WPS staff to attend out-of-district PD opportunities. These actions shaped the district and its schools by leaders prioritizing external opportunities for increased professional knowledge.

We found WPS spent more than half a million dollars ($535,801) in FY19 on external PD (WPS Report to Town Meeting & Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Summary, p. 30). In relation to the

district's PD investments, one district leader referred to providing "buckshot PD opportunities to WPS staff," as a means for supporting their learning. A buckshot PD opportunity is one that is widely communicated and often a one-time experience outside of the school district. Another district leader reflected that "part of what I see as my job is scouring the internet and places to find PD opportunities so that teachers can sign up for them." These specific examples from district leaders showed practices that modeled an awareness to support individualized staff practices through encouragement and communication of PD offerings.

In some cases, staff independently initiated and sought support for PD opportunities, specifically when the expertise the individual needed resided outside of internal district resources. During the semi-structured interviews, staff members across the district often commented that their leaders provided substitute coverage and paid registration fees in order for staff to participate in their choice of adult learning outside of their schools. This practice shaped the work of the schools by staff feeling supported through the time and money provided to attend PD. Furthermore, while some staff referenced these training sessions during interviews, findings showed that staff did not identify PD as pivotal in shaping their practice. Additionally, limited evidence supported purposeful shared learning from these "external" opportunities.

Conversely, another district leader acknowledged that they "made significant investments in bringing in national trainers to come here and certify about 12 or 15 instructors." One leader highlighted that the district-supported PD promoted SEL opportunities such as Responsive Classroom, Trauma Sensitive Schools, and Social Thinking, through an iterative process designed to support internal implementation. Based on our gathered evidence, it was unclear if the district's priorities aligned with buckshot PD opportunities or those that provided iterative training. The inconsistent use of district resources to support staff learning and development

shaped the work of WPS staff.

Overall, this leadership practice shaped the district and its schools since leaders and staff relied on outside resources to support their professional development. Furthermore, leaders promoted opportunities for staff to find and access external PD offerings. However, intentionally using internal time and resources appeared less in the data as a way to gain professional knowledge, and sharing expertise among colleagues did not happen regularly enough for staff to feel it was a standard practice in which they benefited from during collaborative time.

Scheduled Time

Throughout our data collection processes, we found that leaders allocated time for leaders, teaching and learning directors, coaches, teachers, and mental health staff to meet. Through this practice, leaders modeled the competency of social awareness because they recognized the importance of collaboration for staff, and the resource of time needed in which to engage. As one staff member reported, “Even at the highest level, leaders realize how important collaboration is, so they carve out time for it.” This practice of scheduling time shaped WPS leaders’ responsibilities, as it was expected that they would perform this task.

At the school level, our analysis showed that leaders promoted opportunities for staff to formally meet with their leaders and/or colleagues. During the semi-structured interviews, staff members commented that they participated regularly in formal meetings with leaders and/or colleagues. At both the elementary and middle school levels, school and district leaders built four to five formal meetings (e.g., staff, department, community) into their weekly and monthly schedules. Planned district and school meetings occurred both during the school day and after school (including weekly early release days for all elementary staff on Tuesdays). Additionally, interviews indicated that MHS across all schools observed that school leaders provided

scheduled time to collaborate with others. Specifically, leaders modeled relationship skills when they created structures for MHS to participate in job-alike groups or tried to match them up with different related service providers. These examples showed how leaders shaped the interactions of staff by providing opportunities for them to meet.

In relation to the allocation of scheduled time, we heard inconsistent reflections from school leaders and staff. Some staff perceived that collaborative time was not useful and took away from other work that needed to happen. As seen through the questionnaire data, both leaders and staff positively perceived that staff are committed to collaborative time; however, more than half of both staff and leaders did not positively perceive that time was used effectively. Related to this data, we acknowledge that the positionality of each staff member may influence their perceptions about the usefulness of collaborative time. Moreover, leaders also placed an emphasis on supporting summertime curriculum work when they provided teachers or MHS daily stipends. Although one district leader mentioned that leaders encouraged staff to meet as groups during these summer opportunities, school-based staff did not discuss or reference these opportunities as shaping their growth. These reflections highlighted the lack of coherence from WPS staff about the perceived value of their time.

Additionally, district leaders modeled social awareness for school-based leaders by providing time for elementary principals to collaborate during meetings. Moreover, when asked how they show support for collaboration, several district leaders modeled relationship skills by protecting the structures and schedules that allowed for ongoing, consistent collaboration among leaders. Other leadership meetings included principal meetings; superintendent's administrative team meetings, and opportunities for school leaders to work with mental health staff to design interventions. Furthermore, every district leader referred to ongoing discussions between district-

and school-based leaders about the promotion of SEL opportunities across schools and within classrooms. The overarching theme was that district leaders modeled and empowered school-based leaders to engage in collaborative opportunities with their job-alike colleagues.

Leaders Engaged in Relationship-building with Staff and/or Colleagues

Leaders in WPS modeled and/or promoted practices that valued and fostered collaborative relationships with school-based staff and between staff and their colleagues. In response to RQ1, leaders modeled the competency of relationship skills because they communicated clearly when they publicly acknowledged the work of staff and/or showed their appreciation. Leaders also modeled relationship skills when they delivered and shared information during formal and/or informal interactions. Lastly, leaders positively promoted relationship skills when they collaborated with staff and effectively modeled this competency when they offered support. In relation to RQ2, this leadership practice positively shaped WPS when leaders engaged in actions that strengthened relationships through communication, collaboration, and support.

Cooperative Opportunities

Data analysis at the school- and district-level strongly supported the importance of relationships. As an illustration, one district leader commented, “everything that applies to education is all about building relationships so the best way to support the staff is to know them as human beings.” Furthermore, district leaders specifically modeled positive relationship skills by understanding the importance of bonding as a community, and caring about departments as a community of people. In general, we learned that school-based and district-level leaders considered the importance of modeling and maintaining positive, healthy, and supportive relationships.

In order to strengthen relationships, district leaders highlighted that meetings are often opportunities for cooperation, collaboration and discussion, including many ice breakers. They also emphasized the importance of social gatherings and outings outside of school. As noted in one interview with an MHS, "my principal always tries to bring people together." These relationships, in turn, promoted opportunities with staff to engage in practices that developed positive relationships with their leaders. As a result, district and school leaders positively shaped WPS when they exhibited practices that valued WPS staff and their collaborative opportunities with each other.

Staff expressed coaching as a valued resource, specifically when leaders promoted opportunities for subject area coaches to collaborate with teachers in their schools in order to improve their teacher's instructional practices. By promoting opportunities to collaborate with coaches, leaders provided dialogue between staff and their coaches specific to their content curriculum in an effort to bring improvement and change to what happens in classrooms. In some instances, elementary school teachers scheduled time with coaches to be in their classrooms to observe, discuss and advise on the instruction being delivered. As an example, one staff member emphasized that their collaborative relationship with a coach shaped their practices by having a "really good feeling, and I feel like I still can go ask her for advice just because I have that connection with her." In summary, when leaders supported collaborative opportunities between staff and coaches, their practices promoted opportunities for encouraging relationship skills, specifically positive connections and cooperative mindsets.

Clear Communication

In order to promote clear communications, two different district leaders acknowledged open door policies by naming that "doors are always open here." Furthermore, another district

leader commented, “I listen to teachers and if I think if there's something that they think they need, whether it's just time to talk to me or whether it's time to work with their colleagues or whether it's more resources.” Another district leader commented on the importance of having conversations with teachers, just listening to them and asking them questions of what they need. These examples modeled how leaders effectively listened and supported both staff’s individual needs and professional skills.

In addition to supporting by listening, data also showed that leaders modeled the relationship skills competency when they communicated with staff through feedback and praise. Noticing strong practices of staff and appreciating them, led to positive attitudes about meeting with administrators, and the trust and support that ensued. Collectively, we learned that leaders often recognized the work of staff privately and publicly. Leaders provided recognition in a variety of ways, including: notes in mailboxes or on a staff member’s desk, a quick email, a shout-out in a newsletter or publication, a social media (Twitter or Facebook) acknowledgement, or just a quick verbal thank you or high-five. More specifically, staff interviews confirmed the importance of how recognizing others’ successes can support and maintain positive relationships. In general, most staff expressed positive experiences receiving feedback and praise from their leaders as it shaped their perceptions about their own practices.

By providing cooperative opportunities and clear communication, this leadership practice shaped adult relationships by setting the tone for ongoing engagement: therefore, it paved the way towards honest and authentic dialogue between staff and leaders as well as a greater commitment to the school and district work. Furthermore, conversations between leaders and staff were important in building and/or maintaining relationships and staff viewed feedback and praise as constructive and positive. In summary, this leadership practice shaped the district and

its schools since staff felt validated when their leaders took the time to listen to and talk with them about their personal and professional well-being.

Leaders Created Structures for Shared Responsibility Among Colleagues

Leaders in WPS employed practices that modeled SEL competencies and/or promoted SEL opportunities, such as accessing and sharing expertise, encouraging interaction between colleagues, and providing problem-solving opportunities that included consulting and working with others. More specifically, in response to RQ1, leaders promoted responsible decision-making by giving staff opportunities to be involved in decisions regarding their work. While not consistently seen across the schools, when leaders gave staff opportunities to analyze situations and to identify possible solutions, they promoted opportunities to be included in responsible decision-making on behalf of the greater organization. In response to RQ2, shared expertise shaped the district and its schools by implementing collaborative structures that allowed access to the sources of collective efficacy, namely vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Additionally, shared decision-making opportunities shaped WPS by providing structures for leaders and staff to process challenging situations through a sense-making lens.

Shared Decision-Making

Leaders promoted learning opportunities related to responsible decision-making by forming teams to access expertise, analyze situations, solve problems accurately, and provide input into the school community's policies and procedures. Evidence supported that some school leaders included staff in decisions related to their work. When leaders involved staff in decisions, staff reported that they felt valued and trusted. During the interviews, staff provided numerous examples of times when leaders sought their input during meetings, through surveys, or during individual conversations. Specifically, MHS mentioned that principals included them in the

decision-making and communication processes to best support students and keep them safe.

At the district level, one leader highlighted the presence of monthly principal meetings which included shared facilitation roles and open agendas. Specifically, leaders were asked, "What do you need? What would you like some feedback on or what do you need to present to everybody [staff]?" This showed the intentionality of district leaders supporting the individual needs of school leaders as well as encouraging shared responsibility during collaborative opportunities. In addition to scheduled meetings, district and school leaders also referenced frequent opportunities to problem solve together. School leaders felt empowered to call or email various district leaders with a dilemma. In turn, district leaders felt responsible to partner with school leaders "to problem solve things that could really be very impactful to their school or their department." Through these examples, WPS leaders modeled relationship- oriented practices while they interacted with each other, as they assessed outcomes, dealt with challenging situations, and made collaborative decisions.

Conversely, some staff stated that leaders should be more inclusive in decision making and that when leaders asked for input, they should actually consider it. Additionally, although evidence supported that some schools had structures in place to facilitate shared responsibility for decisions, some staff expressed there were many committees where their input was not apparent in the results. Although the practice was modeled, not all staff felt that the decision-making processes were inclusive.

Shared Expertise

Leaders promoted learning opportunities related to relationship skills by allowing staff to observe and learn from each other in order to build collaborative teams and support colleagues when needed. Findings demonstrated that collaborating with colleagues was the primary driver

for staff changing practice. Moreover, staff expressed that they learn from their colleagues and that informal collegial discussions support their work. By recognizing the value of sharing expertise, leaders modeled the competency of responsible decision-making because they assessed what could happen when colleagues learn from each other. Additionally, this practice promoted opportunities for others to take responsibility for the learning and professional exchange of knowledge with colleagues.

Across all six schools, the leadership practice of staff sharing expertise through collegial visits and observations emerged as a common theme. Leaders referenced various structures for sharing learning such as creating a "What do you want to see project?" posting staff schedules online to allow for self-identified pedagogical strengths and times when others can observe, publicly posting a board with staff strengths, and utilizing different frameworks for learning walks. These structures provided opportunities for staff to share their practices in their teaching environment in an effort to display their interactive work in classrooms.

Despite the fact that all leaders identified these different structures for sharing expertise, few school-based staff mentioned these specific practices during interviews. Furthermore, all of the meeting observations provided time for teachers to interact with each other in some capacity, yet, only three of the six meetings followed a protocol for sharing expertise. The questionnaire revealed that while half of staff positively perceived that their colleagues shared their expertise during collaborative time, only some leaders positively perceived that this was actually happening. Collectively, this data showed that inconsistencies emerged between the perceptions of leaders and staff about the value of formal collaborative structures.

Staff reported that collaborating with colleagues improved their instruction and supported their professional growth. One staff member said, "To be able to collaborate with our team helps

my instruction improve. When we were looking at student work, I was able to check out what other classes are doing, and it helps me to learn and grow." In support, leaders provided opportunities for staff collaboration, and when staff engaged with people from different content areas it broadened staff's perspectives. One staff member said, "The best part of collaboration is getting different points of view and working with people with different skill sets." Data also showed that some principals took the time to access the expertise of MHS specifically, by fostering opportunities for collective problem solving and modeling SEL lessons in classrooms.

Our synthesized findings supported the presence of leadership practices in WPS that modeled and promoted the competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These practices shaped the district and its schools when leaders prioritized outside resources for learning as opposed to internal expertise, and leaders provided time in the schedule as opposed to developing greater capacity for shared responsibility of the work. Additionally, staff felt validated when their leaders communicated with them about their personal and professional well-being. Lastly, leaders shaped WPS when they created structures designed for shared decision-making and knowledge. We further extended these findings to establish a framework that explores the importance of these practices and why they matter when thinking about socially and emotionally competent leadership.

Discussion and Recommendations

In WPS, our team found three leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies and/or promoted SEL opportunities: 1) leaders allocated time and resources to meet the needs of individuals; 2) leaders engaged in relationship building with staff and/or colleagues; and 3) leaders created structures for shared responsibility among colleagues. Based on our findings, we connected these leadership practices to the literature and broadened them

further. The result is three leadership practices that support the development of socially and emotionally competent leadership (SECL) in schools and districts. We encourage district and school leaders to implement these practices as outlined in Figure 4.1. In this visual, we display the SEL competencies, leadership practices, and how these practices shape a district and its schools, more specifically, by developing individual capabilities, strengthening coherence of vision and action, and establishing the structures that promote collective leadership capacity.

It is important to note that the identified leadership practices in the visual represent those found within the scope of our study. Specifically, we focused on the identification of leadership practices that modeled and/or promoted SEL competencies (i.e. social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) in the context of adult interactions as opposed to SEL competencies (i.e. self-awareness and self-management) that focus more on attributes specific to an individual. Although self-awareness and self-management are important competencies to develop in SECL, in our study, we did not look for practices that exhibited these competencies. As a result, our visual below highlights the leadership practices and competencies we encourage leaders to develop and support when considering adult dynamics, and a means to SECL.

Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership

The visual we created establishes three practices that can guide leaders in both districts and schools. The center of our visual, "Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership," reflects an intentional integration of the SEL competencies with what leaders think and do. Around the center, we build on and broaden the three identified leadership practices. Specifically, we discuss how each practice can shape the development of individual capabilities, the strengthening of coherence of vision and action, and the establishment of collective leadership capacity in a district and its schools. Finally, the "outer ring" of our SECL visual

reflects the SEL competencies that our study highlights, and that we argue are integral to the work of leaders, districts, and schools. Collectively, the visual below answers our team's research questions: 1) What leadership practices modeled SEL competencies and/or promote SEL opportunities for staff? and 2) How did these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?

Figure 4.1

Recommended Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership (SECL) Practices

The three practices found in WPS enabled our team to collectively develop this visual that constructed meaning and reasoning as to why these leadership practices that modeled competencies and/or promoted SEL opportunities mattered. By implementing these practices, we argue that leaders can increase adult capabilities and their organization's capacity. As defined by

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), capabilities are more than just having "adequate ability," but rather the possession of "attributes required for performance or accomplishment" (p. 55). Additionally, Mullen and Jones (2008) refer to capacity in their work as "enabling the growth of teachers as leaders who are responsible for their actions" (p. 329). Based on our findings and the literature, we assert in our recommended practices that both adult capabilities and capacity improve as a result of SECL, which further extends the research of Cohen and colleagues (2007) who laid the groundwork for differentiating between capabilities and capacity-building.

The first leadership practice that we aimed to broaden, "leaders allocated time and resources to meet the needs of individuals," was significant because leaders showed an awareness of the needs of staff in order to support the development of an individual's capabilities. This practice aligned with Fullan and Quinn (2016) who discussed how surface learning "occurs when the experience is very individualized" and may "result from one-shot workshops and random accessing of online resources without a linkage to broader goals or applications" (p. 61). Capabilities of staff in an organization are built by offering individualized support to followers (Leithwood, 1994) and leaders are expected to assess followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treat them as full human-beings (Northouse, 2016).

The significance of this practice of allocating scheduled time and resources is that the formal leaders at WPS provided time and budget to what staff felt were important to their work or dictated as iterative training that supported the district's vision and goals. However, we learned that individualized PD was primarily happening through buck-shot opportunities outside of the district, without coherence or alignment to collective goals. We argue that leaders should recognize that providing opportunities for staff to seek expertise outside of the district may not have been as cost-effective or as valuable as creating opportunities for staff to leverage expertise

from within the organization itself (Leithwood et al., 2019). Seeking outside PD opportunities did not necessarily yield more efficacious results.

From our findings, we broaden this original practice to one that develops SECL by arguing that leaders should be aware of the needs of staff in order to develop individual capabilities. Specifically, we recommend that WPS implement PD into their scheduled meetings and utilize the expertise found internally to grow staff capabilities. Forman et al. (2015) supported this recommendation by asserting that "professional development events are replaced by a culture of professional learning that happens in real time throughout the school year" (p. 218). This recommendation reflects an understanding that adult learning should be embedded within scheduled time and often take place in collaborative peer structures such as networks (Leithwood et al., 2010).

The second leadership practice that emerged from our findings, "formal leaders engaged in relationship building with staff and/or colleagues," was significant because leaders demonstrated that engaging in and modeling healthy relationships with staff and colleagues promoted the implementation of SEL competencies that built individual capabilities. It built these individual capabilities by considering the individual's needs and what supported them emotionally and stimulated them intellectually (Leithwood, 1994). In order for this practice to happen, leaders implemented practices that encouraged collaborative relationships between leaders and staff. The SECL practice that we established from this original practice is that leaders built and encouraged relationships with and between staff in order to build coherence of vision and action. We acknowledge that the organization benefits when leaders model, through their practices, important organizational values and their vision (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). Additionally, this practice aligns with the research of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) who

maintained the importance of relationships for strengthening individual and collective commitment to the organization. Specifically, we recommend that WPS strengthen adult relationships by clarifying roles and responsibilities of administrators, coaches, and staff that align to the vision of leaders with the actions of staff. For example, explicitly naming the differences and/or similarities of the roles and responsibilities of coaches, administrators, MHS, and teachers related to the planning, facilitation, and outcomes of weekly team meetings within the schools. The research focused on role clarity and intentional alignment of collaborative work reflects the research of Donohoo (2018) who asserted that common understanding of responsibilities is essential to group effectiveness.

The third leadership practice that we looked to broaden, "leaders created structures for shared responsibility amongst colleagues," was significant because leaders, at times, supported a distributed model of shared decision-making that led to capacity building in their organizations. Data inconsistently supported that WPS staff felt empowered to contribute in shared decision-making structures and shared expertise opportunities. In order for this practice to happen more frequently, leaders should work internally and with intentionality to create opportunities for staff leadership to develop (Patti et. al., 2015). Specifically, by identifying where social capital exists and utilizing it to share expertise, schools and districts can most effectively influence practices and beliefs between colleagues (Minckler, 2014; Guskey, 1996). By implementing this approach, the organization can benefit by developing structures that foster participation in school decisions and improvement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

The leadership practice that develops SECL is that leaders model and promote responsible decision-making in order to build collective leadership capacity. Specifically, we recommend that WPS formally identify internal expertise and provide these informal staff

leaders with opportunities to model and promote their practices through adult learning structures (see Minckler, 2014; Leana, 2011). Within this final recommendation, we argue that leaders should support adult learning structures that share expertise, in the context of staff making responsible decisions for the good of the organization. We argue that this recommendation leads to collective leadership capacity where formal leaders do not need to facilitate all collaborative interactions and manage individual actions (see Spillane, 2004). We assert that the more that expertise is identified and collectively shared, the greater the capacity of the organization, and the stronger likelihood that the organization will reflect a consideration of the greater good (see Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

Limitations

This study identified leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for district and school-based staff, while investigating how those leadership practices shaped a district and its schools. We acknowledge the following areas with limitations: 1) generalizability of findings; 2) time period of research; and 3) data collection and analysis.

A limitation of our study was the generalizability of the findings due to the small scope of the study. Because our research focused on a single unit of analysis, one school district in Massachusetts, our findings are not generalizable to other school districts in Massachusetts, or in the United States. While generalizability was a limitation within our study, the purpose of our study was not to seek ultimate truths, but to understand the relevance of our findings both as educational leaders and contributors to existing research (Mills & Gay, 2019). Despite a focus on one district, our process of selection ensured that the district we studied provided meaningful insights about a district-wide focus on SEL, and assisted us in identifying themes that we believe

are relevant to other districts in the process of implementing this type of reform, because qualitative research builds theory.

The specific time period during which the data was collected and analyzed was driven by the research team's limited timeframe, and thus we only captured a moment in time. As a result, we were not able to analyze how each of our individual research themes and the leadership practices evolved over time. The district hired a Director of SEL two years prior to our study, which likely played a key role in our findings. Entering a district in the initial stages of a district-wide focus on SEL would likely result in different outcomes than entering a district deeply engaged in SEL. However, our findings are relevant and meaningful as they could assist other districts in developing leadership practices that model or promote SEL competencies.

Importantly, we did not gather data from all members of the case study district, but rather from a purposeful sample of district and school leaders. District, schools, and leaders were purposefully selected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), however, individual staff participants volunteered to contribute to this study. Self-selection into the study opened up the possibility of participant bias in terms of what they wanted to promote or conceal as strengths or challenges both within the district and as individuals. To mitigate this bias, we asked probing questions to maximize the interactions between the participant and interviewer to increase rapport and reduce the risk of socially desirable answers (Patton, 1990). In addition, we used multiple sources of data to allow for methods triangulation in this study.

We aimed to access a range of perspectives by collecting data from documents, questionnaires, observations, and interviews to triangulate the outcomes of the interview analyses. It was important that we had multiple data sources because, "every type of data has

strengths and limitations, using a combination of techniques helps compensate for the weaknesses found in one approach (Salkind, 2010).

We analyzed documents that were readily and publicly available to district and school staff, parents or guardians, and the community. We interviewed district administrators, principals, teachers and mental health staff who volunteered to participate. Their perspectives were not necessarily representative of the perspectives of all certified professional staff in the district and its schools. In addition, schools are dynamic environments in which the teachers and administrators can change from one year to the next.

Finally, this qualitative case study has the potential for validity errors. According to Creswell (2014), validity signals that the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures. To improve validity, we posed "how" research questions that influenced the use of strategies to address external validity (Yin, 2014). We triangulated our data sources, data types, and methods, while reflecting upon the data collection and interpretation process in an effort to minimize methodological threats to interpretation of the data (Yin, 2014).

Conclusion

Our collective findings supported the identification of leadership practices in WPS that modeled and promoted the SEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These leadership practices shaped the district and its schools when leaders encouraged collaborative relationships and supported the development of individual capabilities, needs, and professional skills. Furthermore, our collective research led to the identification of new leadership practices that supports the development of SECL.

We argue that implementing leadership practices with the intention of developing SECL has the potential to positively shape a district-wide focus on SEL, the sources of collective

efficacy, adult collaboration, staff resilience and well-being, and the work of MHS. As a result of our research, leaders should focus their efforts on cultivating the capabilities of the adults through structures that promote collaborative and collective expertise. Additionally, we acknowledge that relationships and resources have the potential to positively shape the work of educators and the tasks that we cannot accomplish individually. In conclusion, by developing SECL practices in districts and schools, adults will grow their professional knowledge, vision and actions will align more coherently, and shared responsibility will build organizational capacity. Ultimately, district and school-based leaders and staff will benefit the students they teach and support.

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Appendix A

District Leader Interviews

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools
Interview Protocol and Note-Taking Form

Researcher (to be read to participants): Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research questions are, "How do leadership practices model SEL competencies for adults, or promote the social and emotional learning of teachers and other staff?" and "How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?" We will be asking questions related to general leadership practices, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience and well-being, and the work of mental health staff.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Before starting we would like to get your consent to participate in this study and permission to record this session. (Get signature on consent form.) Thank you. (Once recording starts.) The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the Westlake Public Schools. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45 minutes for this conversation and a questionnaire that we will ask you to complete at the end of the interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so.

Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

QUESTIONS (Look for leadership practices – what leaders think and do)

1. What is the role of leadership in your district/school? In other words, what do leaders do?

2. a) In your district/school, who supports your work and what type of things do they do to show support?
   b) Whom do you support? What do you do to show support?

3. a) How are collective and/or individual goals established in your district/school?

b) What do you do to support this process?

4. How do you show support for collaboration in your district/school?

5. What do you do to actively encourage your staff's professional growth and development?

6. How have SEL initiatives been implemented in your district/school in the last 3 years?
Probe: What drove the district to implement a district-wide SEL initiative(s)?
Probe: In comparison to other district-wide (school-wide) initiatives, how would you prioritize the SEL initiative(s)?
Probe: Is SEL part of the district's strategic plan (school's strategic/improvement plan)?

7. What opportunities were available for district and school personnel to come together to make sense of the implementation process and expectations?
Probe: Assuming there were both formal communications (memos, emails, meetings) and informal communications, what were the most effective platforms to assist school leaders in making sense of the change process?
Probe: What is your perception of how school-based leaders understand, and make sense of, the SEL initiative?

8. What was your understanding of SEL prior to the rollout of the initiative by the district?
Probe: What, if any, prior training or professional development have you participated in outside of the district?
Probe: Please describe the focus of the training or professional development (type of professional development; SEL and leadership vs. SEL for students)

9. How was the implementation plan communicated to school-based leaders?
Probe: What rationale/vision/goals for the SEL initiative were communicated to you?
Probe: What strategies were used during implementation to help school-based leaders understand the purpose of the initiative?
Probe: What strategies were used during implementation to assist school-based leaders with making sense of the initiative?
Probe: How would you measure "full implementation" of the SEL initiative in your school?
Probe: How many schools would you characterize as having fully implemented the SEL initiative?

10. How has the district-wide SEL initiative informed your leadership practices?
Probe: Can you describe any changes to your leadership practices since the implementation of the SEL initiative(s) in your district/building?
Probe: How do you support the SEL initiative in your role as a district leader/school-based leader?
Probe: What leadership practices have you found most effective during and after implementation of the SEL initiative(s)?

Appendix B

School-Based Leader Interviews

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants): Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research questions are, "How do leadership practices model SEL competencies for adults, or promote the social and emotional learning of teachers and other staff?" and "How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?" We will be asking questions related to general leadership practices, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience and well-being, and the work of mental health staff.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Before starting we would like to get your consent to participate in this study and permission to record this session. (Get signature on consent form.) Thank you. (Once recording starts.) The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the Westlake Public Schools. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45 minutes for this conversation and a questionnaire that we will ask you to complete at the end of the interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so.

Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

QUESTIONS (Look for leadership practices – what leaders think and do)

1. What is the role of leadership in your school? In other words, what do leaders do?

2. a) In your district/school, who supports your work and what type of things do they do to show support?
   b) Whom do you support? What do you do to show support?

3. a) How are collective and/or individual goals established in your district/school?
   b) What do you do to support this process?

4. How do you show support for collaboration in your district/school?

5. What do you do to actively encourage your staff's professional growth and development?

6. Describe what you do in meetings.
(Exposes what the interviewee thinks a leader does in the context of collaboration.)

7. What do you see as the benefits of collaboration in your district/school?
(Exposes the interviewee's perceptions of collaborative time)

8. What do you do that contributes to your staff's feelings of success?

9. What opportunities do you provide for your staff to learn from their colleagues?

10. What and/or who drives you to change your practice?
(Probe: Can ask specifically about adults.)

11. Are there things that you do that promote social and emotional learning opportunities for staff? If so, what are they?

12. What types of things seem to cause the most stress for teachers and what do you do, if anything, to support teachers when they are feeling stressed?

13. Do you engage teachers in decision making that is related to the work that they do in this school? If so, how?

14. How is feedback delivered and how open are teachers to receiving feedback?

15. What are the primary responsibilities of mental health staff? How is this determined? By whom? When? How would you change this?

16. How do you manage the mental health staff's work and/or interactions with students and how does the work impact students?

Appendix C

School-Based Staff Interviews

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants): Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research questions are, "*How do leadership practices model SEL competencies for adults, or promote the social and emotional learning of teachers and other staff?" and "How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?"* We will be asking questions related to general leadership practices, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience and well-being, and the work of mental health staff.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Before starting we would like to ***get your consent*** to participate in this study and permission to record this session. *(Get signature on consent form.)* Thank you. *(Once recording starts.)* The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the Westlake Public Schools. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45 minutes for this conversation and a questionnaire that we will ask you to complete at the end of the interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so.

Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

QUESTIONS (Look for leadership practices – what leaders *think and do*)

1. What is the role of leadership in your school? In other words, what do leaders *do*?

2. a) In your district/school, who supports your work and *what type of things do they do* to show support?
   b) Whom do you support? What do *you do* to show support?

3. a) How are collective and/or individual goals established in your district/school?

b) What do leaders *do* to support this process?

4. How do leaders *show* support for collaboration in your district/school?

5. What do leaders *do* to *actively encourage* your professional growth and development?

6. Describe what leaders (i.e., teachers or administrators) *do* in meetings.
(Exposes what the interviewee thinks a leader does in the context of collaboration)

7. What do you see as the benefits of your collaboration?
(Exposes the interviewee's perceptions of his/her collaborative time.)

8. What do leaders do that contribute to your feelings of success?

9. What opportunities do leaders provide to learn from colleagues?

10. What and/or who drives you to change your practice?
(*Probe: can ask specifically about adults.)*

11. Are there things that your leader does that promote social and emotional learning opportunities for staff? If so, what are they?

12. What causes you the most stress, and what if anything, does your leader do to support you in managing this stress?

13. Does your leader engage you in decision making that is related to the work that you do in this school? If so, how?

14. How do you receive feedback from your school leader and how do you usually feel after receiving feedback?

15. What are the primary responsibilities of mental health staff? How is this determined? By whom? When? How would you change this?

16. How does the principal manage the mental health staff's work and/or interactions with students and how does the work impact students?

Appendix D

BC DIP SEL Coding Manual

Codes that focus on leadership practices and support, interview questions, social and emotional learning competencies and skills, adult collaboration, collective efficacy, and resilience and well-being

While entering into the initial coding process, we began our coding manual to define the SEL skills related to each SEL competency and came to an "aha realization" that CASEL may have purposefully selected different verbs when outlining each of the skills. No verb is repeated. We expect to use these verbs to support our findings and discussions when thinking about our research questions related to LEADERSHIP PRACTICES - what leaders think and do! Out of the 29 SEL skills identified, ***23 skills are action oriented*** and ***6 skills are descriptive.***

General Codes

Parent code	Child code	Definition
Leadership Practices	**THINK**	To have as an intention or opinion
	DO	To perform or execute
Leaders Support *(reoccurring themes)*	**LISTENING**	To hear something with thoughtful intention
	TIME	A measurable period when an activity or thought exists; *Schedules
	TRUST	Assured reliance on someone to be honest, truthful, good
NON-SEL		A leadership practice that does not model one of the CASEL competencies

Interview Question Codes

Parent code	Child code	Interview question number	
Interview Questions	School-based leaders	**SBL #1** **SBL #2** **SBL #3** **SBL #4** **SBL #5** **SBL #6** **SBL #7** **SBL #8**	**SBL #9** **SBL #10** **SBL #11** **SBL #12** **SBL #13** **SBL #14** **SBL #15** **SBL #16**
	School-based staff	**SBS #1** **SBS #2** **SBS #3** **SBS #4** **SBS #5** **SBS #6** **SBS #7** **SBS #8**	**SBS #9** **SBS #10** **SBS #11** **SBS #12** **SBS #13** **SBS #14** **SBS #15** **SBS #16**

*Note: The coding of transcripts needs to identify leadership practices that **model (i.e., display and/or demonstrate)** or **promote (i.e., actively encourage)** SEL competencies.*

CASEL Competencies (5) and Skills (29)

Parent code	Child code
Self-awareness	Accurate self-perception
	Sense of self-confidence
	Self-efficacy
	Recognizes strengths
	Identifies own emotions and impact on others

Parent code	Child code
Self-management	**Controls** impulses
	Manages stress
	Self-motivated
	Self-discipline
	Sets goals
	Exhibits organizational skills

Parent code	Child code	Definition
SOCIAL AWARENESS	RESPECTS OTHERS	• Shows respect to others and consideration for them *praise or affirmation
	SHOWS EMPATHY	• Demonstrates perspective taking an/or affective understanding
	APPRECIATES DIVERSITY	• Recognizes the importance of and understands inclusivity as it relates to race and other marginalized groups
	ABLE TO CONSIDER OTHERS' PERSPECTIVES	• Works to understand what others are experiencing and thinking
	UNDERSTANDS SOCIAL AND ETHICAL NORMS	• Perceives the importance of and has an awareness of how to act and interact with and around others for the common good
	RECOGNIZES FAMILY, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS	• Identifies and acknowledges available resources
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS	WORKS COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHERS	• Interacts collegially with colleagues
	RESOLVES CONFLICTS	• Works with others to improve challenging situations
	COMMUNICATES CLEARLY	• Deliver, share or exchange information, news, or ideas in understandable ways
	ENGAGES SOCIALLY WITH DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS	• Interacts w/ individuals of different races and/or other marginalized groups
	COLLABORATES WITH TEAM MEMBERS	• Meets and works jointly with colleagues and supervisors
	LISTENS WELL	• Gives one's attention to someone
	SEEKS AND OFFERS HELP WHEN NEEDED	• Receives and gives support when needed
RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING	MAKES ETHICAL CHOICES	• Acts with and makes decisions with moral principles
	IDENTIFIES AND SOLVES PROBLEMS	• Finds and deals with challenging situations and figures out ways to improve them. *technical problems, for example
	REFLECTIVE	• Makes thoughtful decisions
	ANALYZES SITUATIONS ACCURATELY	• Examines methodically and in detail within a specific context for the purpose of interpretation; *adaptive problems, for example

	EVALUATES CONSEQUENCES IN CONSIDERATION OF THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS	• Assesses what could happen and how it could impact others for positive outcomes; *people-oriented, relationship-oriented

DIP Focus Areas

Parent code	Parent code	Parent code
Sensemaking	Teacher resilience and well-being	Mental health staff

Parent code	Child code	Definition
COLLECTIVE EFFICACY	**MASTERY EXPERIENCES**	• When you feel that something you did works
	VICARIOUS EXPERIENCES	• Seeing/hearing someone else have a successful experience • Sharing a successful idea
	SOCIAL PERSUASION	• Receiving feedback from someone else that causes you to reflect or change practice
	AFFECTIVE STATES	• Actions that make you feel a certain way
ADULT COLLABORATION	**POSITIVE ATTITUDES**	• Supportive, trusting • Committed, motivated • Understanding of collaborative roles • Accountability to team • Shared philosophy/goals
	TEAM PROCESS	• Communications b/w colleagues • Clear, formal processes • Collective effort over individual wants
	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	• Clarity of focus (standards, expectations, values) • Teacher voices in planning • Connections b/w activities and classrooms • Teachers and administrators share expertise • Ongoing activities, flexibly scheduled • Community building climate
	LEADERSHIP	• Shared leadership • Supportive climate • Volunteer for leadership roles • Effort is recognized • Participants hold themselves to high expectations
	RESOURCES	• Targets needs • Ongoing assessment • Participant initiated
	BENEFITS	• Evident • Lived and prominent • Public recognition

RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING	**COLLABORATION**	Two or more staff members and/or leaders and staff members coming together to: • support each other or seek support from each other • problem solve • produce or create something (i.e. policies, curriculum • share work, ideas, successes and frustrations
	RECOGNITION AND FEEDBACK	• Acknowledge the contributions and efforts of staff • Share staff contributions with others • Celebrated successes • Notice tings that made a difference for colleagues and/or students • Provide positive feedback during evaluation process • Offer constructive feedback to support growth in a thoughtful way
	INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING	• Seek staff input • Listen to suggestions and ideas • Include all stakeholders in conversations related to decisions • Engage in constructive discourse to make better decisions • Use provided suggestions • Make decision making process transparent
	WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND SELF-CARE	• Allow staff to attend important family events • Encourage care of children and family members • Recognize family needs during crisis or trauma • Model work-life balance • Provide opportunities to engage in self-care at work • Offer workshops and training related to stress reduction and well-being • Promote growth mindset

Boston College PSAP

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools

- Michele Conners
- Mark Ito
- Adam Renda
- Geoff Rose
- Donna Tobin

- October 6, 2019

Defining Social and Emotional Learning

Dusenbury, Calin, Domitrovich, and Weissberg (2015) define Social and Emotional Learning as:

The process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student and citizen (p. 2).

SEL competencies	Definition of competency	Examples of skills with the competency
Self-awareness	Recognizing one's emotions, thoughts and values and how they influence behaviors, and identifying and cultivating one's strengths and limitations, and positive qualities	Accurate self-perception, sense of self-confidence, self-efficacy, recognizes strengths, identifies own emotions and impact on others
Self-management	Monitoring and regulating one's emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations and establishing and working toward achieving positive goals	Controls impulses, manages stress, self-motivated, self-discipline, sets goals, exhibits organizational skills
Social awareness	Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others and appreciating the value of human differences, understanding social and ethical norms for behavior and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports.	Respects others, shows empathy, appreciates diversity, considers others' perspectives, understands social and ethical norms, recognizes family, school and community resources and supports
Relationship skills	Establishing and maintaining healthy, rewarding relationships with diverse individual and groups based on cooperation, listening, support, effective (clear) communication, conflict resolution, and an ability to resist inappropriate social pressure	Works cooperatively with others, resolves conflicts, communicates (clearly) effectively, engages socially with diverse individuals and groups, collaborates with team members, listens well, seeks and offers help when needed
Responsible decision-making	Making constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. Evaluating consequences of various actions in consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.	Makes ethical choices, identifies and solves problems, reflective, analyzes situations accurately, evaluates consequences in consideration of the well-being of others

Table 1. Social and emotional learning: competencies, definitions and associated skills. Adapted from "What does evidence based instruction in social and emotional learning actually look like in practice?: A brief on findings from CASEL's program reviews" by Dusenbury, L., Calin, S., Domitrovich, C., & Weissberg, R. P., 2015, *A Publication of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning*, Chicago: CASEL; and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017, retrieved from https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Competencies.pdf

Appendix E

School-Based Leader Questionnaire Protocol

The questionnaire will be conducted by a Boston College dissertation team. The questionnaire will be conducted using Qualtrics and all information that could be used to identify a respondent or link responses to individual respondents for any question will be maintained in storage that is secure. ALL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from your responses to this questionnaire will be compiled by dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any survey participant in any report or presentation concerning the survey or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

SCHOOL-BASED LEADERS

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire as part of our data collection. Again, ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from responses to this questionnaire will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study. Thank you

Response Scale for each questions (note: this survey was conducted on-line and the scale was available after each question in a multiple choice format).

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please answer the following 25 questions by choosing the number that describes your experience best.

Collaboration

1. I feel that teachers' collaborative time is used effectively.
2. I feel that teachers are committed to collaborative time.
3. I feel that teachers are motivated to use collaborative time productively.
4. I feel that teacher roles are clearly understood during collaborative time
5. I feel that teachers are accountable for their collaborative time together.
6. I feel that teachers have time collaboratively to discuss teaching and/or instructional standards.

7. I feel that teachers share their philosophies, goals and/or expertise during collaborative time.
8. I feel that teachers reflect on their work during collaborative time.

Collective Efficacy

9. Teachers in this school are able to get through to difficult students.
10. If a child doesn't learn something the first time, teachers will try another way.
11. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.
12. If a child doesn't want to learn teachers here give up.
13. Teachers here need more training to know how to deal with challenging students.
14. Teachers in this school think there are some students that cannot be successful.
15. Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.
16. Teachers here fail to reach some students because of poor teacher-student relationships.

Resilience and well-being

17. Teachers tend to bounce back quickly after difficult situations.
18. I help teachers through stressful events.
19. It does not take teachers long to recover from a stressful event.
20. It is hard for teachers to recover when something bad happens at school.
21. Teachers often feel overwhelmed.
22. I help teachers find creative ways to deal with difficult situations.
23. Regardless of what happens in teachers' classrooms, I can control my reaction to it.
24. I believe teachers can grow in positive ways by dealing with difficult situations.
25. I help teachers develop healthy coping mechanisms for handling stress.

Appendix F

School-Based Staff Questionnaire Protocol

The questionnaire will be conducted by a Boston College dissertation team. The questionnaire will be conducted using Qualtrics and all information that could be used to identify a respondent or link responses to individual respondents for any question will be maintained in storage that is secure. ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from your responses to this questionnaire will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any survey participant in any report or presentation concerning the survey or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study. This questionnaire will be given to interview participants at the end of the interview.

SCHOOL-BASED STAFF

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire as part of our data collection. Again, ALL INFORMATION PROVIDE WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from responses to this questionnaire will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study. Thank you.

Response Scale for each questions (note: this survey was conducted on-line and the scale was available after each question in a multiple choice format).

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please answer the following 25 questions by choosing the number that describes your experience best.

Please choose the number that describes your experience best.

Collaboration

1. Teachers feel that collaborative time is used effectively.
2. Teachers are committed to collaborative time.
3. Teachers are motivated to use collaborative time productively.
4. Teacher roles are clearly understood during collaborative time.

5. Teachers are accountable for their collaborative time together.
6. Teachers have time collaboratively to discuss teaching and/or instructional standards.
7. Teachers share their philosophies, goals and/or expertise during collaborative time.
8. Teachers reflect on their work during collaborative time.

Collective Efficacy

9. Teachers in this school are able to get through to difficult students.
10. If a child doesn't learn something the first time, teachers will try another way.
11. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.
12. If a child doesn't want to learn teachers here give up.
13. Teachers here need more training to know how to deal with challenging students.
14. Teachers in this school think there are some students that cannot be successful.
15. Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.
16. Teachers here fail to reach some students because of poor teacher-student relationships.

Resilience and well-being

17. I tend to bounce back quickly after difficult situations.
18. Leaders here help me through stressful events.
19. It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.
20. It is hard for me to recover when something bad happens at school.
21. I often feel overwhelmed.
22. Leaders help me find creative ways to deal with difficult situations.
23. Regardless of what happens in my classroom, I believe I can control my reaction to it.
24. I believe I can grow in positive ways by dealing with difficult situations.
25. Leaders help teachers develop healthy coping mechanisms for handling stress.

Appendix G

Documents

Faculty Meeting Agendas (with linked presentations) – Elementary

Faculty Meeting Agendas (with linked presentations) – Middle School

Glows and Grows Chart – Middle School

Publicly Displayed Posters and Messages in School Buildings – Elementary

Publicly Displayed Posters and Messages in School Buildings – Middle

School Newsletters - Elementary

Staff Newsletters – Middle School

School Websites – Elementary

School Websites – Middle School

Teacher Evaluation – Redacted – Middle School

Twitter Account – Elementary School

Twitter Account – Middle School

Wellness Committee Activity Suggestions – Elementary

Appendix H

Value Terms for Number of Respondents

Value for Number of Recipient Respondents on Semi-Structured Interviews

Term/ Frequency	Number and/or position (Total = 31 staff and 8 leaders)	Prevalence in data collection
Rarely	< 3 staff 1 leader	Was mentioned at least once, but was not a prevalent theme in discussions or contradicted overall theme
Few	4–9 staff 2–3 leaders	Was mentioned occasionally, but was not a major topic shared during data collection
Some	10–16 staff 4 leaders	About half of respondents brought it up, and it still appeared relevant
Many	16–25 staff 5–6 leaders	Many of the respondents touched upon this topic
Most	26–31 staff 7–8 leaders	Most or all of the respondents commented on this theme in some way